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Better than the
rest of us in
every way P.18

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The fight's
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TO HIT
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SOON**
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BARACK OBAMA WHY HE'S BAD FOR CANADA

**His ambitions
could cripple
our economy P.20**

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'Teenagers binge drink because they see countless examples of it from so-called adults'

BAILOUT BONKERS

ANDREW COYNE puts a different spin on the auto bailout ("We'll pay for this bailout for years," *Opinion*, June 15), but what is a taxpayer to do? We wish in horror as our federal and provincial leaders spend our money trying to save the already dead North American auto companies. One of them should have been allowed to go under. It would have given the others a reason to shape up and compete without draining the country into the ground. Isn't that what should happen in a market-driven economy? Now all the capitalists have become socialists. They will take our money, and our children and grand children will pay for it.

Leonard Taylor, Cambridge, Ont.

IT'S ABSOLUTELY unfathomable to see government banking out companies like General Motors. As a teenager I may not understand the complete waste of consequences this may bring, but I know perfectly well that this money could be used more effectively to do other things. It's unbelievable that thousands of well-shed jobs are subsidised when thousands of foreign doctors and engineers are leaving away for \$400 an hour. Requiring the news is so depressing, no wonder none of my peers do it anymore.

Emily Zito, Toronto

ANDREW COYNE's reporting of the General Motors-Chrysler bailout money pay is spot on. Seldom have so many of our hard-earned tax dollars been so needlessly thrown at such a tiny number of actual beneficiaries, based on the Chicken Little parable of a few. But there some charity for poor Prince Metamorphosis Stephen Harper, inside Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, he really had no option. Once Premiered at Barrie, Ontario decided that politically he owed endless billions to the American auto workers. Harper's only play was to follow suit. Both our auto bailout and our current economic crisis can be almost solely laid at American doors, which are person to United States dollars, but remain locked to any real benefits. An individual can only hope that somewhere there lurks a Canadian party with enough courage to say "no more" when the carmakers and unions inevitably return with further outrageous demands.

Donald McKay, Calgary

ADDING UP AUTO COSTS

ANDREW COYNE's perspective on the myth about auto worker wages. The \$10 per hour wage that Mark Reiter says "American auto workers" expect cost, "Seems," June 15) is a made-up number by an American conservative pundit opposed to this bailout. To get that number they combined salary, benefits, pension, profit, on retirement and various "marketing" expenses, then divided that number by active workers, and came up with \$70 per hour. The true hourly wage of the United Auto Workers' active workers is almost the same as the non-American manufacturers, UAW



COYNE hopes there is a political party who will say "no more."

a better measure to young people is to tell them that in a socialist system, they can probably save enough to buy a car or a down payment on a house with the money they would otherwise spend on parking.

William Glegg, Gabriola Island, B.C.

ALBERTA AGENDAS

ANDREW COYNE's report on the Alberta agenda, a letter to the editor, is a brilliant way to tell them that in a socialist system, they can probably save enough to buy a car or a down payment on a house with the money they would otherwise spend on parking.

William Glegg, Gabriola Island, B.C.

TEACHING TEMPERANCE

AS THE ORIGINATOR of the "Dry Grid" concept in *Prohibition*, I, C. I. am disappointed that the moral on temperance drinking programs, based on parents' "Should you're kids drink or not?" (Harris, June 15), is far from satisfactory. It's not that they are doing something responsible, but that it causes a false sense of safety, no parent or host can ensure that no one will leave early, have a bad day or get

under the car, consume alcohol or excess, or that older people won't cost the party. There is a whole body of law that pertains to "social bad behaviour" part of dealing with those of us who are drinking. One could think that responsible parents would reduce that by steps such as parents who are not only putting their guests at risk but are putting their financial security at risk as well. After a devastating spree of grid-related deaths at 3 C., in the '90s and '90s started to get it right and realized there was a sale and value alternative to the backyard underage drinking party. Parents should wake up

and send the law!

David Perry, Port Hope, B.C.

INSTEAD OF focusing on postpaid alcohol, how about putting the onus on the adults and the alcohol itself? Culture they could be young people? Teen binge drinking they see countless examples from so-called adults. I am glad to see that some parents are attempting to introduce responsible drinking to their teens, but

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of that is not the most important part of the parliamentary day. Often, the media make it on their QP performance, rather than on their skills while debating legislation—which takes up most of the sitting day. Of course, most of the press gallery is never anywhere near the House of Commons when QP is on, perhaps that has to do with their 10-second attention spans. The quickest solution would be to shut down the TV cameras in the House and send the press gallery away for a coffee break for the 45 minutes of QP. If that doesn't cure the silly thing we have now, then nothing will.

Joe Kadis, Winnipeg

PEAK OIL

BRIGID MACLENNAN for the article "Energy shocks and oil crisis" (*Business*, June 15) took

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IT'S INEVITABLE that the archaic, cash-based distribution system is entering its final days.

up with aghast-like society. It is obvious that the religious right has no interest in diversity. They disagree when the schools try to open up minds to the differences in our culture. I think it would be wonderful to teach about all major religions, but they don't want that. They want fervour and narrow indoctrination. Clearly the religious right need their own schools, which they can fund themselves. I, for one, am tired of their crying in their loss of conflict with the general public.

Jeff Kelly, Brandon, N.S.

QUESTIONABLE PERIOD

PAUL WELLS provides some interesting suggestions as to how to fix the presently ridiculous question known as the House of Commons' special period ("Stop the madness," *National*, June 15), particularly involving some of Britain's best parliamentary practices. However, many of the bills are simply used to show some of the blame for our problems. The Canadian parliamentary press gallery has too great an emphasis on QP as

all and its present dramatic impact on our way of life as a well-known subject. Even though the article attempts to be balanced in possible, nothing is less one with the idea that everything is all right, and that once more technology is going to save us. Even your article mentions, please the word "crisis" after the word "oil." Colin Campbell hardly mentions buildings, our greatest source of energy. New technology will not make any stable dent in their energy use, unless we spend more money on research or something else. The only thing that can save us is a good government to use more energy. There is one reason to think that we are going to change. As the cost of energy will continue to rise, wouldn't it be better to start planning now?

Marianne Leary Collet, Orleans, Ont.

ALL THIS DEBATE on the impact of peak oil is irrelevant. What matters is how we can reduce our dependence on oil. The Canadian parliamentary press gallery has too great an emphasis on QP as

all and its present dramatic impact on our way of life as a well-known subject. Even though the article attempts to be balanced in possible, nothing is less one with the idea that everything is all right, and that once more technology is going to save us. Even your article mentions, please the word "crisis" after the word "oil." Colin Campbell hardly mentions buildings, our greatest source of energy. New technology will not make any stable dent in their energy use, unless we spend more money on research or something else. The only thing that can save us is a good government to use more energy. There is one reason to think that we are going to change. As the cost of energy will continue to rise, wouldn't it be better to start planning now?

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peak supply, and therefore peak supply is irrelevant. We are in the midst of a massive revolution, the likes of which the world has not seen. Now that the Internet allows for complete knowledge sharing, no one knows how we will come out of this crisis. The only way to survive is to have a strong, central, authoritative body. No one knows how we will come out of this crisis. The only way to survive is to have a strong, central, authoritative body. No one knows how we will come out of this crisis. The only way to survive is to have a strong, central, authoritative body.

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not Amazon.ca. Understanding the fundamentals of the gadget would be a helpful prerequisite for its use. *Shirley Danks, Surrey, B.C.*

CITY SMARTS

SOURCE ARTICLE: "Canada's smartest cities" (Special Report, June 8) seems to have over-

fazed learning with spending money. According to your methodology, free activities like attending free concerts, reading books from the library, or going for a run are worth nothing. This hardly makes it an accurate measure of lifelong learning. You look safer neighbourhoods, good health, and low crime rates to the learning index, but aren't the smartest cities linked with higher income? The smart have more likely dropped because Canadians have less disposable income to spend on cultural activities than they used to. This does not make them any dumber than they used to be, only poorer. To expect them to keep up their spending is simply ridiculous. *Sophia Lindgren, Richmond, B.C.*

IN YOUR special report on Canada's most activities, you drew from study that measures only the dollar amount spent on sports and recreation. This may not be an accurate representation of the actual amount of time people are engaging in sports and recreation, it merely tells us who is spending more. What about the people actively using the community tennis courts, jogging on outdoor paths, or playing hockey on a frozen lake—all free activities? *Stephanie Guyart, Windsor*

HOW BOMBAY that Quebec stood against the federal government. In the last election over the issue out to the arts the government was proposing, and yes Montreal and many Quebec cities scored very low on Maclean's survey for education, culture and physical activity. Congratulations to Calgary, the best town



"MANY PEOPLE forget the human rights abuses in China"

from the West (in the eyes of most Canadians), for lending in all three categories. *Louise Fribourg, Abbotsford, B.C.*

CHINESE TAKE OUT

THANK YOU, Maclean's, for consistently opposing the *quasi fascist* regime of China and reminding people of the 20th anniversary of Tiananmen Square ("It didn't happen," World, June 15). Far too many people see only economic growth while forgetting the gross human rights abuses perpetrated by the government of China. Maybe our Prime Minister will resign some backlogs and cancel his planned trip. *Hussein Fakhria, Toronto*

TAX APPRECIATION DAY

MILLIE VELDHOUSE of the Fraser Institute writes in his letter (World, June 15) that your columnist Andrew Potter makes the point of Tax Freedom Day. Veldhouse tells us that Tax Freedom Day, by giving us a "dose idea" of the price we must pay for government services, is a simple tool that allows Canadians to judge for themselves. Yet Tax Freedom Day omits the benefits received from all our gov-

ernment services. If it is the intention of the right wingers at the Fraser Institute to help Canadians decide whether our infernally burdensome taxes are worth it, then they should tell us about not only the total amount of tax imposed on the average Canadian family, but also the total amount of government services the average Canadian family receives a year, including things like law enforcement and schools, roads, parks, national defence and foreign aid, as well as all those services that governments subsidize.

Lynne Huang, Ottawa

COMIC CONTROVERSY

ONCE AGAIN, Quebec nationalists have proven themselves to be more than their French counterparts. According to David and M. Bala M. Bala (Interview, June 15), "Quebecers are less affected by the controversies" that surround racism, misogyny, homophobia, sexism, and religious intolerance because, unlike his fellow racist, they can appreciate his self-proclaimed comic hyperbole as "a promotional strategy." Based on promotion? Their racist remarks are not only revealing of the self-censoring behaviour, but, apparently, demonstrate his misperception of the province's diversity. What there is not a performer worthy of his audience? *Chris Ahmed, Windsor*

THE CONTROVERSY surrounding David and M. Bala is ridiculous. Canadians regularly joke that at anyone and anything, it's part of the trade. He is only guilty of targeting Zouk, one of the most powerful lobbyists in the world, and serving no genuine political purpose. He is denounced only because many of the things he says ring true; the situation in Israel-Palestine is inescapable, it is comparable to

apartied, and Zionism is a political movement that must be resisted.

Zachary Swenson, Pickering, Ont.

WHAT AILS US

BECAUSE I wrote Feedback for his column "Bitterness is our birthright," people (Feedback, June 15) I couldn't agree more. We need to examine up and away making ourselves feel big. There are makers billions of dollars each year in wine and more diseases seem to emerge. This practice of disease emerging needs to stop. With diseases such as meningitis, one really begs the question: what came first, the pill or the disease? *Melody Akhavanian, Thornhill, Ont.*

KEITH'S NOTE: The *Cinque du Soleil* has publicly conveyed its "shock and profound disappointment" that such a respected and well-established magazine would make use of the cover page of its June 11, 2009, issue to promote a book (Jan Halpern's *Guy Laliberté: The Fabulous Story of the Creator of Cinque du Soleil*) through a sensationalistic photo montage and a vulgar title giving a false, unjust and defamatory image of the company.

Maclean's does not agree with that characterization—the cover image was in fact available on the Cinque's own website—and we recognize that the Cinque is a great Canadian creative institution. We are unabashed fans of its work. Halpern's book is an unauthorized biography of Guy Laliberté. The excerpts of the book that were published in the magazine refer to past events and do not necessarily reflect upon the Cinque du Soleil itself as an ongoing business enterprise or on its current employees.

We welcome readers to submit letters to editor@maclean.ca or at Maclean's, 11th floor, One Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ont. M5T 1Y7. Please supply your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters should be less than 300 words, and may be edited for space, style and clarity.



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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF MOAMMAR GADHAFI

The Libyan leader visited Italy and went to Villa Pamphili, a large public garden in Rome, where he pitched the tent he stays in while travelling. On Friday, he failed to show for a meeting with deputies on the Italian parliament. Later, to avoid a diplomatic row, he met in his tent with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who explained that Gadhafi is "a bit unique." That evening, he addressed more than 700 activists or businessmen, claiming to be a defender of women's rights.

Good news

Bench strength

U.S. judge got it right this week when he acquitted a marine to water down the findings of a seven-month inquiry into the death of Polish immigrant Robert Dondoski. Lawyers representing the four RCMP members who teamed the case at the Vancouver airport had argued the inquiry had no jurisdiction to rule on the conduct of the police, after inquiry head Thomas Reid would never be "sifted" into the western-most jurisdiction and that the Ministry limited the inquiry to another victory for common sense, the Supreme Court of Canada restrained the invocation of Kelly Halloran in the murder 12 years ago of teenager Susan Vukich had had three trials: one hung jury and two guilty verdicts overturned on appeal. A fourth trial would have been a logistical challenge, and a nightmare for the Vukich family.

Comeback kids

After they finish the first two games of the Stanley Cup final, we thought the Pittsburgh Penguins had a chance against the Detroit Red Wings. When they came back and forced a game seven in Joe Louis Arena, where the Red Wings rarely lose, the odds were all against them. Yet the Penguins pulled it off, making their Crosby, at 21, the youngest captain to lift the Cup. It was a thrilling end to the season, and a bonus: eight million Americans watched the final game—the biggest audience since the 1971 final between Montreal and Chicago. Thanks to the Penguins and to young stars, hockey's future is bright.

Howing forward

An outreach program by the University of Victoria has attracted more than 600 First

Bad news

Spare us the squibs

Federal politicians squandered yet another week churning up when the country desperately needs effective leadership. First, Michael Ignatieff threatened to bring down the government; unless Prime Minister Stephen Harper agreed to provide details on further EI reforms. The PM responded with equal (and equally empty) promises, flatly refusing to attach the EI scheme. What did this latest round of per-

making an effective s

prosperous can scarcely afford to replace. Volunteers spend thousands of hours each year plugging the lost and injured from E.C. backcountry, while local citizens pay their insurance. If liability fears drive them out of business, doctors who wander into trouble in the future may find themselves with no rescuers at all.

Failing grades

A country with survey by the Dominion Institute of Canada gave P.E.T., Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories with an "F" for failing to test its students about the country's past. Meanwhile, an independent review mission in New Brunswick recommended more standardized tests in francophone schools after finding that French students perform worse academically than those in English schools. Few provinces are quick to take up Canada's well-educated, bilingual workforces when trying to lure investment. They should invest a little to keep it that way.

FACE OF THE WEEK



ing education into a positive experience, as UVic has, is an essential first step.

Rat Island, pop. 0

It took 329 years, and a week of snarling poisons by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to end the plague of rats on Nikoi's Kai Island. Norway was carried onto the stormy island in 1780 from the wreckage of an infested Japanese ship. The rats had

seems than a meeting between the two leaders, and a promise to...ah, meet again. Thanks, guys. That should fix the economy.

Rescue the rescuer

Volunteer search and rescue organizations in B.C. have been shocked into chaos over a lawsuit by Colleen Blackburn, whose wife froze to death last winter after the Quilchew couple were skiing out of bounds at the Kicking Horse Resort. The suit alleges members of a nearby rescue society were too slow to respond to their distress calls. While Blackburn deserves sympathy for his loss, his claim rings



NEWSMAKERS

Phalpe gets smoked

Archie Seaton's Clara Grand Prix in California last Sunday, Vancouver's Brent Hayden finished the men's 100-freestyle race in 48.44 seconds, a new record, becoming right-time Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps's sub-half-second. "I was really excited," Hayden told the Canadian Press. "Michael's such a great competitor and every time I get up and



Here's your visa,
Mr. Rao. You're not
welcome.

last week, Labor's throne after **Eric Roake** was named editor of an *Sinclairian* newspaper, allegedly for being a "Total Tugboat socialist" and a "security risk"—and **Quintus** modestly may be to allow. According to the Toronto *Star*, **Irving de Silva**, a *Sin* *Lauckian* wrote an opinion piece in the June 8 issue of *The Island*, a major *Sin* *Lauckian* newspaper, in which she counseled former Secretary **Bill Robinson** to avow the situation that had been used to fire a three-day *Star* disclosure. **Rae** for having rejected *Sin* *Lauckian* and *Canada* to look into human rights violations committed by *Sin* *Lauckian* officials over the course of the bloody 29-year civil war between the *Sin* *Lauckian* majority and the *Tugboat* minority. "We are sure that *Rae* will return with damning report on the government of *Sin* *Lauckian* and path to

For other investigations, public media reports that there is discrimination, etc." de Silva wrote. Granting a visa to Raju she said, was an "act of foolishness" in Sri Lanka's racist-oriented *Daily News*, the *Sunday Times* continued after his departure. One columnist argued that Raju is pandering to the large fraction of Tamil expats who represent in Canada "who are not just vocal but openly violent in their support for the cause of terrorists in Sri Lanka." In his statement, Raj called the charges made against him "absurd" and "ill-informed and stupid."

Teacher's pet

Two-year-old Kennedy Corpus of Great Bay, Wis., was granted special permission to miss her last day of school to attend a noon half-price meeting about health care led by President Barack Obama himself. When her father, John Corpus, stood to ask a question, he told the President that his daughter was missing school to be there. "Do you need a note?" Obama asked, then proceeded to jot one down on a piece of paper. "So Kennedy's teacher, Patsie comes Kennedy's absence. She's with



She's still the one

Last week, Canadian country diva Shania Twain posted an esoteric update on her official website, after a tumultuous year following the public breakdown of her marriage to Robert "Mutt" Lange. She apologized to her fans for her prolonged absence, "but as most of you know," she wrote, "I have been sidetracked slightly over this past year." She added that ensuring her trans-

Also jumping out of airplane...

Former U.S. president George Bush Jr. celebrated his 63rd birthday last week by throwing his self out of a plane travelling at 20,000 feet over Kennesaw, Ga. The president, who skydive tradition with Sgt. Michael Eilford of the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, called it "a great day in the air." He told reporters he did the jump to show other seniors that "just because you're an old guy, you don't have to sit around drinking in the corner." Bush also received a post-



And another thing
Patin thinks

One of Russia's greatest actors, 79-year-old Ilja Glazunov, has agreed to "fit" one of his paintings after Vladimir Putin stopped by his home for a visit, examined the large canvas, which depicts a medieval knight and proclaimed "The sword is

too short. It's barely good enough for sitting assuage." Glance readily agreed. Putin reportedly considers himself something of an expert even since one of his own pitkinings sold at an auction in January for \$1.37 million. Although, at the time, not everybody was impressed with his work. One artist told Britain's Telegraph, "Altogether who demands that the world play by our rules could hardly have painted such a picture. It looks as if it was painted by a successful woman like too lower." The artist asked to remain anonymous.



Such great heights

Journalists took great delight in the opportunity to photograph French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who is five foot five, propped on a five foot stool at a celebratory commensuration: D-Day in Normandy recently, to appear as tall as the other world leaders at a summit (including U.S. President Barack Obama, six foot one). Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, six foot two, and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, five foot eleven). An employee of the French TV station Canal Plus told *Londone's Daily Israel*



Deep-sea time

A woman who identified herself as **Amanda Lindbergh**, the freelance journalist from Sylvan Lake, Alta., who was kidnapped in Somalia last August, called CTV News last week and made an emotional plea to be rescued. "I've been held hostage by gunmen in Somalia for nearly 30 months," the woman said. "I'm being kept in a dark, windowless room in exchange, without any kind of drinking water and little or no food. I've been very sick for months, without any medicine." International aid agencies were

sworn, Mario Bormacelo, and he believed it was a computer-generated image. "SVT is happy to write around with our spokes," he offered. Meanwhile, in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, anti-outs of *Red Pet* are being used by Russian police as a dog-patrol strategy to curb spreading, a growing problem in the city. The theory is that life-sized anti-outs of *Pet* dressed as a traffic cop, placed at the most dangerous intersections, will cause so much confusion to cause their fall-off the gas-and take a look.

According to a report in the *Homage* magazine, *Argumenty i Fakty*, Dmitry Zlyomov, the official who decided the plan, says it is working. *Pet*, he said, "to kind of like a colleague for us."



that the hunger Lindhoist and her Australian colleague Nigel Newman are facing, the more danger they face. "They are really getting imperiled," Ambrose Farris, the Africa expert with Reporters Without Borders in Paris, told *Carwest News Service*. "The kidnappers wanted to negoti-

School's out forever

Chao was a graduate student at Nankai University in southern China, where his instructor's anger in philosophy class worked out at the master's age 90. Chao, better known to his fellow students as "Grandpa Chao," began his graduate studies after the hospital where he volunteered dismissed him for being too old. "I was banned after I left the hospital," he told the Associated Press. "I don't play mah-jongg or have other hobbies." Chao focused his studies on the works of the fourth-century B.C. "Taoist master Chuang-tzu, in whose one 26-page-old diatribe against Confucius I see a lot of myself." He is almost an icon, not fighting anyone, and Liang Wu Chen, adding that Grandpa Chao had great respect for his much younger teachers and loved giving them addresses of the Tao. The hardest part of all this, Chao said, was remembering his name. "I don't remember things as well as my fellow students," he told. His solution was to pull all his memories before an icon. "That way, the material was still fresh for my mind."





PROTESTING the British National Party (the fringe right's party in the European Parliament) have been greatly exaggerated, says Walls

The feeble 'march' of Euro-fascism



PAUL WALLS

cover pages of *prose* that in ourselves and/or the cover line THE RETURN OF FASCISM.

The cover pointed to a column by our Mark Steyn. And Mark's column—well, it's a bit of a mess. Mark's why.

The European Parliament's largest bloc, after the centre-right and the socialists, is the "neo-cons." Mark notes "their member has implied to 'just stand a handoff' (thanks, he claims, to the European elections of June 4-7). These neo-cons 'include'—heavily worded—members of the 'The Five,' four from the British National Party, two from the Austrian Freedom Party, and so on. Many of these lively additions to the political scene," Mark writes, "are party members that shy meekly away."

A hand-drawn brand-new euro-depicted with swastika? Goodness. Fortunately it's halfway there are ended 911 neo-cons. But not, for the most part, because of this decision. Largely it's because the 21 member identity, Tradition and Sovereignty tradition left (part in 2007)

Two major, many more neo-cons.

How many of the 11 are of Swedish? Mark's estimated 140,000 (19,000 of 750 in the European Parliament. Let me tell you about the rest.

One, Elie Maccini, is the leader of France's Alliance des Droits-Mor. It's a neo-conservative movement from Maccini. One, Joe Higgins, leads Ireland's Socialist Party. One is from Sweden's Prime Party, which supports free internet for sharing. One of the British MEPs is an Ulster Unionist. Another is a Democratic Unionist, which is kind of the same. One, Andrew Turner, is the host of Britain's version of *Are You Smarter Than a 14-Year-Old?* These are American who are neo-cons. These are American who are neo-cons. These are American who are neo-cons.

But while it's fun to watch Mark's feasts against my horridly over-the-top one by one, that ignores the party's addition of the majority of the neo-cons. Most come from the heart of the European parliament. Nine are members of the Czech Republic's governing Civic Democratic Party. Twenty-one others belong to Italy's centre-left Democratic Party. And 25 are members of David Cameron's U.K. Conservatives.

These aren't fascists.

Neither, in fact, are all of the 15 that Mark lists. One belongs to Latvia's Civic Union party (leader is Sandra Kalniete). She was born in a Soviet labour camp in Siberia. A leading figure in the Latvian independence movement, she was her country's ambassador to France, then its foreign minister. She was a European commissioner for agriculture. This minister's leadership is larger than the population of Latvia, and I really wish Mark hadn't used our pages to imply she is a fascist.

I count 67 neo-cons who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called fascists. The rest, when I don't vouch for, amount to 3.5 per cent of the European Parliament's members. Mark says the EU is "filled by slow-growth neo-fascists." A postscript says the gloom is at least 36 per cent empty. An optimist says it's 141.

Steyn's fascist is too many. But fascists can't be "back" if it never went away. Steyn says the U.K. "created a dark Rubicon" by electing two British National Party members. Must be the same Rubicon a crossed in 1944, when Conservative Peter Griffith was in Switzerland as the slogan, "If you want a bigger far right, vote Labour." In 2003, Mark wrote a column about Britain's extreme right winning 39 per cent of the vote. This year was 18 per cent. Using the trend line I'll take it.

But I have to ask: Since Mark is using Roberts and Cameron and dozens of others to put his neo-consistently, perhaps he could define fascism in the modern European context. And tell us what he thinks about it, if anything.

I think because he says these groups are "cul-

turally prescient in a way the polytechnic left must eventually reach." Whatever a polytechnic left is, Mark is clearly not in. In an apparent reference to newspaper columns, he complains about "delusory five-year [statistics] 'forecast' at every effort to the mainstream parties." Which one? Is there a single columnist today for a large Canadian newspaper who shrinks about "rational" as frequently as Mark Steyn shrinks about labels?

Mark blames the left's hypersensitivity for driving "more and more of the European vote" to "fringe parties." As examples he names Dutch documentarian Gert Wilders and the UK Independence Party. He sees "nothing" as enough IDPP to the fringe. That's the blinkers of the politico-media class. And he has been told Wilders every time, always supportively. Mark seems they both worry about Muslims. In his film *Wilders*, Wilders displays a bar graph that shows 14 million "Muslims" in the EU. The number comes from the Central Intelligence Agency. In 2006, Germany, which notes that only 14 million of those Muslims are in the European Union. Another 25 million are in Russia and 39 million in Turkey. Who asked whether between Turkey in the EU, Wilders said, "No Not in 70 years, not in a million years." Yet he's eager to put Turkey's Muslims in his bar graphs. No wonder Steyn likes him. They're both sloppy counts. ■

ON THE WEB: For more Paul Walls, visit his blog at www.modernism.co.uk/news

Peak water, peak fish and the end of everything



ANDREW POTTER

a Whole Lot Smaller

Robin is a former chief economist for CIBC World Markets, and a recent convert to the economics of peak oil—the supposed point at which global oil production reaches an maximum level, after which it enters a long, slow decline. The result, Robin argues, will be a world where demand increasingly outstrips supply—and the end of the entire global

economy under foot, surprising many from a world whose last pit was producing where the grey economy is headed, all this talk of peak oil is old news. The political movement has already moved on from its obsession with oil and—like the peakism movement of yore—into a multitude of fictions, each warning of the impending catastrophe consequences of one form of peakism or another.

And so to the peak oilers, we new find people binging on about peak oil (the point at which the amount of food we can pull from the sea goes into decline), peak oil (something except for agriculture), peak water (an impending water shortage) and peak carbon (which has something to do with global warming). A former Conservative member of the House of Commons named James Leith has identified something he calls peak debt, the point at which the ability of consumers to access credit will run out, with a credit-lary called peak dollars, the supposed limit of the government's ability to print money.

And recently, in a slightly different vein, educational policy folks have warned about peak enrolment, after which university enrolment will go into terminal decline, presumably leaving the prospect of academic looking like an abandoned set on a new Mad Max sequel.

These arguments can be seductive. Reason, after all, are facts, and it stands to reason that at some point we'll drill all the oil, and fish out the oceans. But there is hope, whether or not the peakists like it.

As to extreme peakism: though it rejects the foundational economic principle of free competition, down over the long term, increased productivity leads to ever-higher levels of prosperity, social stability, and well-being earned in any number of sectors, followed by an extended or permanent period of decline. The assumption of all historical trends in production and consumption inevitably continue along their current paths, with no hope for innovation, no leaps in technological progress or improvements in institutional design.

But why should we buy this assumption? It is utterly ahistorical to think we're not going to get massive innovation in each of those sectors. Over the past 100 years, little in the developed world goes without being better by almost any conceivable measure. Life expectancy rose while infant mortality dropped, the quality of our lives improved. And yet the as-

per and more automation, and the workforce became faster wages steadily declined. There is no reason to think that sort of across-the-board progress cannot be sustained. From global warming to food production to the current economic crisis, the odds are we're going to figure things out.

Peak oil may just be a much needed first step toward progress. As President Obama's new energy secretary, Steven Chu, has argued, much of our energy technology in 19th century technology compared with other areas of innovation—computers, biotech, information technology—energy was a period of almost total stagnation in the 20th century. The simple reason is, there's so much energy in oil that nothing else could compete. Our technology now has to overcome the barrier of technological stagnation, to high prices that could eventually lead to a better solution. To put it another way, the Stone Age didn't end because they

reached "peak stone." But that's historical precedent: you. Peakism are does not put by pessimism about the economy or the environment, but a deeper distrust of the entire modern project. Call them doomism, dystopianism, or neo-Calvinism, but they are at heart "doctrines." And what overflows doctrine is an abiding distrust for the modern world—the urban infrastructure, the industrialism, the shallow entertainment and mindless consumption. For doctrinaires, peakism is not a threat but a hope: once the collapse happens we'll be thrown back into a low-input hyper-local subsistence economy—precisely the sort of lifestyle many doctrinaires think we should be adopting regardless.

The doctors stay right. Thanks to smaller oil, our world may get a whole lot smaller, and as a result, the best case scenario of a more local economy that will replicate local jobs and revitalize hyper-local food, doesn't sound so bad. But what about the prospect of more people chafing over fewer resources, leading to civil strife, population displacement, even war? Even if it doesn't come to that, there is no reason to think our lives will get a whole lot better. Much about the good old days was truly awful, which is why people began to get a great amount of effort trying to make things better. They called it progress—perhaps the case old-fashioned idea worth preserving. ■

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Potter, visit his blog at www.modernism.co.uk/news/potter

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON WHO DON NEWMAN WILL MISS AND RONA AMBROSE'S MAN-HATING DOG

SOMEBODY AT STORNOWAY IS OUT OF SORTS

Michael Ignatieff held a media garden party at Stornoway, his first since becoming Liberal leader. The *Brookside* Youth Jazz Orchestra from his Toronto riding provided the music. The party was supposed to go from 6 to 8 p.m., but when it started pouring (chilly Ignatieff? No, it's serious), Zashar, asked the remaining guests into the house, where audiophiles stayed chatting with Iggy in her living room until 10:10. Zashar's and Iggy's first love, Mitt, was jumping all over the place. (He even jumped Ignatieff's car, when he was break fast.) The couple had got their second cat, Eric, the day before the bush so Mitt was in a bit of a huff. Stornoway's chief, Josh Deane, calls Mitt "an evil cat." Zashar visited Mitt in the bathroom, and, despite her jumping, even Mitt got a nuzzle.

WHO KNEW OUR SENATORS WERE THAT FIT?

Vancouver Conservative MP John Weston had several politicians, sports coaches, and Laurence Harper gather in front of the Peace Tower as part of his initiative to get MPs to exercise at least "50 minutes 50 seconds" twice weekly in fitness activities. The amount of time is compared to the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. When Conservative MP Nancy Greene Kaine told the crowd that 80 percent of westerners already had some sort of fitness regime, a few guys were heard. Labour Minister Lena Austin brought her dog Luna to the event. When Peter Soffer tried to pet the pooch, Austin warned the NDP MP that Luna hates men. But Luna liked Soffer for some reason. Austin group did a walking lap around the hill, they posed AIDS activists dressed in black and white-striped prison



MICHAEL IGNATIEFF and the *Brookside* Youth Jazz Orchestra (top left), (then clockwise) Don Newman, Alvaro Uribe, Rona Ambrose and Lorne, Libby Davies, Bill Blaney and a CBC producer, Catherine Zashar with Mitt, (center) Martha Hall Findlay's catfish ribbon

uniforms protesting the criminalization of HIV transmission, saying it is the only potentially fatal pathogen being treated this way. The AIDS activists were supported by NDP MP Libby Davies and Bill Blaney as well as Liberal MP Hedy Fry. Before the AIDS protest had wrapped up, another group of demonstrators arrived with a flag of Stephen Harper and Colombian President Álvaro

Uribe during Pierre Trudeau's first government. He was the first junior reporter to have a tape recorder. "I was laughed at and ridiculed both by broadcast and by colleagues in the print press." He has no plans to be a politician, although his name has been mentioned. Mike Duffy, who is now a senator, always had an interest in the upper chamber. "I am very happy to have that finally got where he wanted to go." Newman hasn't voted in a federal or provincial election since 1973 because he can't remember them.

"I do vote municipally. I don't know who is running for council. I vote for the school board although I have no idea who they are." When CBC got the Newsworld channel, Newman was told by his bosses not to waste his time on it. They later admitted they were wrong. "I know Newsworld was going to be a big success because Brian Mulroney would phone me personally on the commercial break." Will he miss wearing makeup every day? "No," says Newman. "But I've had a wonderful person (Joan Hodgson) who has done my makeup since 1994. I will miss her company every day."

WHAT'S MARTHA HALL FINDLAY WEARING?

Toronto's *Upbeat* MP Martha Hall Findlay was spotted wearing a scuba ribbon she got from the governor of Norway. Her Liberal colleague Audrey Roy, who has the far industry promotion organization for Harvards Auction in his northern Ontario riding, says he plans to get scuba ribbons for all the Liberal MPs. ■

LUCKILY DON NEWMAN IGNORED HIS CBC BOSSES

CBC Newsnight MP Peter Newman will soon retire. He arrived on the Hill as a Globe and

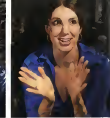
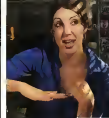
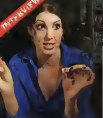
ON THE WEB: For more Ottawa stories or to contact Mitchell Raphael visit [mitchraphael.ca](http://mitchraphael.ca/mitchraphael.ca)

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL RAPHAEL

Your lenses can feel this fresh every day.

Just like that morning shower gives you a fresh start every day, ReNu® Fresh Lens Comfort™ gives your contact lenses a fresh start every morning. ReNu removes deposits while cleaning and conditioning your lenses, so they feel like new all day, every day.

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'Tall expert' **Arianne Cohen** on why tall people are smarter, healthier, richer and more attractive—and why we always vote for them

A CONVERSATION WITH LIANNE GEORGE

When Brooklyn journalist Arianne Cohen was a five-foot-three-eight-year-old, her classmates nicknamed her *American Girl*. Her publisher told her she was going to be "taller than the president," who at the time was not every little girl's role model. *A five-foot-one Ronald Reagan*. Now 25, Cohen stands proudly at just five feet. Her new book *The Tall Book: A Celebration of Life from Francis High to the Aesthetic Guide to the Tall Experience*, the unapologetic trials and benefits that come with height, and why tall people have higher salaries, IQs and life expectancies than the rest of us.

Q How do you define tall? I'm five inches. I thought I was tall.

A Height is relative. Generally, you're considered tall if you're in the top 10 per cent, but functionally, if you're towering over the people around you, you are tall.

Q You say this is the book you always wanted to read growing up. What do you mean?

A Height has really defined every aspect of my life, from which parties I participated in to who I dated to what I wore—because I couldn't wear most clothes—to even what profession I ended up in. There's been a tremendous dose on height and tall people but it was all rooted away in different corners of the world. I really wanted to create a bible for tall people—one book of foundational knowledge to really paint a picture of tall culture, because there really is a culture but it has never been written about.

Q Like the fact that it's annoying when tall people are asked if they play basketball.

A There are those big questions that tall people are asked constantly. How tall are you? How tall are your parents? And do you play basketball? Tall people everywhere have been asked these questions thousands of times. **Q** Judging by your book, tall people seem to be sort of all-around better for one thing: they're healthier.

A Yes, height is used by the United Nations and the World Health Organization as a very broad indicator of how populations are doing. Height is extremely sensitive to all the average heights of a population plus a half inch or a quarter-inch, something marked is going on. They're not getting good health care, they're not getting good food.

Q It's true that in the United States, people are getting shorter?

A Yes, and no. It's really stunning. In the last 20 years, the average American woman's height has dropped from five-foot-four to five-foot-three and change, and it's really a scary trend. One of the reasons for this is that most people don't get the care they need. In Sweden and the Netherlands, where both have top-notch prenatal care, they have the tallest people in the world.

Q You point out that tall people control most of the American economy. Thirty per cent of American CEOs are over six feet five. Are tall people generally richer?

A Tall people make \$789 more per inch per year than average-height people and this has been proven repeatedly. It's kind of funny

for me to say I'm going to make \$500,000 more in my career than you are, but when you look at it as a mean population, in the U.S., that's \$170 billion in income coming from the thousand quarters to the million quarter every year. That's not a joke.

Q No, it seems pretty unfair. Why is it happening?

A As it is, it is behavioral. Tall people often take on the role of leader at every young age because their peers relate to them as an older child. So it's the role they play. Even as a 12-year-old in a company, every often the tall guy or girl decides where everybody is going for lunch and is just sort of the ad hoc leader. That's really important when it comes time for promotions because the boss is going to give the leadership role to the guy who's already in it. That's just how it goes.

Physically, tall people are also related to less workplace accidents. When friends talk to each other, they tend to lean in about 18 inches apart, co-workers talk about three feet apart, and when you talk to the boss, you give the boss a good four feet. That's not a thingy or code book or personal space. But tall people are always given four feet, like the boss. So those who wholeheartedly derive of body language going on from the beginning.

Q So they're not necessarily smarter.

A Tall people are indeed intellectually superior but before that people everywhere come out and attack me, the reason tall people are a bit smarter is because the same childlike enthusiasm that produced healthy bodies also tend to produce sharper bodies. It has

to do with nutrition, education, health care, and just well-being broadly speaking.

Q So, basically, tall people are advantaged in every way and we should all resent them.

A It's interesting. Because tall people very consistently make more money, two Harvard economists recently wrote a paper laying out a strategy and process for a tall man.

As a tall person, I find this offensive for many reasons, but primarily because the tall life is usually fairly expensive. Yes, tall people make more money but they also spend more on everything from airplane seats that fit to using 30 per cent more of all products than, say, long towels. I just significantly more than my petite friends do. But American politicians tend to be quite tall—over half of our senators are over 6 feet tall—they won't be voting through a tall law any time soon.

Q American presidents are even taller. You wrote that over the last century, the average president has increased in size five feet one. But not all powerful world leaders have been tall. Leonard and Eleanor Roosevelt, LBJ, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy.

Q Did the average size also rise, isn't it just as much for short guys growing up?

A It's true. That's a kindness there between tall women and short men. They both understand what it's like.

Q Now personally don't "size down," as you call it. Why not?

A It sounds horrible to say, but it's very true. As quickly when I walk into a room, particularly at a social event, I don't even see men who are shorter than me. One of the things I've really wanted on since writing this book is looking down from time to time because I realize that tall women have low birth rates. They have 0.7 children on average in their lifetime where average-height women have 1.4 children. The reason is very tall women want to date within their own tribe. They want to date up. But me, that really limits my dating pool. We're talking 5 per cent of the male population. And when you add in all of your ridiculous qualifications for any man of your date, you're talking about a minuscule percentage of the population and I'm stuck in that. I'm going to end up single.

Q It's true that short guys it where all men date shorter women.

A It drives me crazy because it really does. It's a personal bias of mine. But it's representative of the fact that tallness on the asset successful dating population on earth. Most heterosexual people date somebody who's about an eight per cent height difference from them, which is about five inches. Tall men are really the only ones who don't do this. Tall men date whoever the hell they want. They date, on average, someone who's eight inches shorter from them. So when you look at the statistics, who you end up with again as a tall woman, who you don't have partners.

Q But there's not plenty of men who have a particular attraction to tall women?

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Q But there's not plenty of men who have a particular attraction to tall women?

As my son a right now full of crabs from men who insist tall women. Tall women are about power dynamics—a man who wants to be envied by a woman, it's not downward. Since the Second World War, there's been an association popular culture between tall women and dominance and sexual aggression. A little while ago, I was at a social event, I was navigating silently. I really would have appreciated knowing that before the time that I went on a date and he requested that I stand on a stool and that we make out. I didn't get it.

Q What's the most extreme tall experience you've ever had?

A When I was working in Cambodia as a journalist, I was the tallest person that anyone there had ever seen. I was taller than any man, I was taller than what they considered of America. GIs from the Vietnam War. I needed to get an emergency appendectomy



"Tall women have low birth rates. They want to date within their own tribe. That really limits the dating pool."

in 1974 and they removed my appendix and took a MRI and came in and told me that my pancreas had a tumor on it. They showed me a picture of my pancreas and showed me where we supposed to end and it sounded five inches past that. It turned out that this diagnosis have a lot on the wall of range of organizes and that mine was more than double the typical. This person and I was all just sitting misunderstanding, I went to work. It was a hospital thinking I was going to die of pancreatic cancer. Then the doctor tells me, "No dear, you are just tall!"



WHY BARACK OBAMA IS BAD FOR CANADA

The new President's ambitions could have a devastating effect on our economy

BY LUYA CH. SATAGE • When Barack Obama met with Stephen Harper in Ottawa on Feb. 29, his message on the oil sands sounded like it could have been written in Calgary. He talked about the need for government investment in new technologies to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and he wanted to work together to achieve it. "I love this country and think that we could not have a better friend and ally," Obama said. "And I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure that our relationship is strengthened."

He added, "We are very grateful for the relationship that we have with Canada, Canada being our largest energy supplier." Tom Corcoran, a former Republican congressman from Illinois and head of a Washington lobbying outfit for the oil sands and other "unconventional" fuels, remembers the day. "It was encouraging and made us feel good."

But it turns out that Obama has a plan for making people feel good when perhaps they ought to be scratching their backs. "Then the malices begin to take root when you look in what is taking place here in Washington," says Corcoran. The malice is that Obama is leading an aggressive effort to remake American energy policy with potentially severe consequences for the oil sands, and by extension, the Canadian economy.

The oil sands currently export about half of their production of 1.2 million barrels per day to the U.S. Over the next 15 years, according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute in Calgary, that production will more than double, to five million barrels per day, with most of that oil going to the U.S. For Canada, that will mean 140,000 new jobs—and an additional \$1.4 trillion in GDP, which will add \$12.2 billion in tax revenues, more than half of which would go to Ottawa.

So Canada has a lot at stake in the process that Barack Obama set in motion by calling on Congress to pass climate change legislation this year. In the House of Representatives, where the American clean energy and security bill has been drafted, Democratic leaders such as Speaker Nancy Pelosi and



ALBERTA HAS an uphill battle, says an allyway for the NRCC

California's Henry Waxman, the chairman of the energy and commerce committee, have Alberta's oil push squarely in their sights.

Oil is the petroleum world's up to 15 percent more greenhouse gases than the production of conventional oil, not to mention the toll it takes on the landscape. These concerns have caused American policy toward the oil sands to undergo a complete U-turn under Obama and congressional Democrats. The Bush administration saw the oil sands as a strategic continental resource. George W. Bush dispatched his energy secretary to Fort McMurray, Alta., to see the operations for himself, and the 2005 energy bill even included a section to partner with Alberta to share information on developing oil from U.S. tar sands and shale. But the 1,000-plus-page climate change bill now winding its way through Congress is full of potential sanctuary for Alberta and Canada.

The legislation, written by Waxman and Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, calls for reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by a whopping 80 percent by 2050. It also includes a cap and trade system and a sequester that would get at least 15 percent of state electricity from renewable fuels. "Alberta has an uphill battle," says Lori Ransom-Brown, a senior attorney for the environmental group

National Resources Defense Council in Washington, who has been closely watching the oil sands issue. "There are large reductions. They change the way we use fuels. You can see the writing on the wall for tar sands," even more daunting for Canada, the bill includes provisions that would punish exports from countries whose carbon regulations are deemed by Washington to be less stringent than those of the U.S.—making it potentially much more broadly protectionist not only on exports but on other sectors of the economy as well.

These measures are meant to address the potential "competitive imbalance" created for some U.S. industries by the costs of compliance with the new cap and trade regime in place to protect domestic industry and to mitigate so-called "carbon leakage"—factors moving to countries with less stringent rules—the legislation calls for a tariff to be imposed on imports of manufactured products from countries whose carbon reduction regulations are deemed not to be "at least as stringent" as those of America. Canada's environment minister, Jim Prentice, has denounced the measure as "open protectionism." He told Maclean's that he's "confident" that Canada at the end of the day will have environmental legislation that is competitive

'GOODWILL ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. FRIENDS DON'T CUT EACH OTHER OFF AT THE KNEES.'

with that in U.S. "However, to be fair, the legislation leaves open the possibility of abuse." Once you have protectionist authority in the legislation, there is always the possibility for mischief in the application in a way that is prejudicial to Canada.

The provision would apply to goods, ranging from steel and pipes to pulp and paper, from a nation whose rules are not deemed "commensurate" with that of the United States. Obama may be a self-proclaimed environmentalist, but the provision holds the potential for a unilateral economic wall-off—or at least slowing Washington's very heavy hand in the writing of climate rules of its trading partners. Worries Prentice, "Like beauty and fairness, the definition of 'commensurate' will apparently be in the eye of the American beholder."

For as much as Canadians love Obama, it is possible he doesn't love us back. The climate change legislation comes at a time of severe protectionist sentiment in Congress and an erosion of trust in Canada in response to "Buy American" provisions in the \$14.7-billion stimulus bill. When he met with Harper, Obama seemed that his administration would adhere to commitments in international trade

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THE CLIMATE BILL's author, Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), former AFL-CIO lobbyist Murray Saypol

After the cars are approved by blocking the fuel with more expensive additives, say paying for others. The rub for Alberta was that in assuming the "carbon intensity" of a California vehicle is not only at the tailpipe emissions—which is the source of all standards and governmental fiat—but took an opposing "credit to prove" approach from production to combustion. Because the energy intensity reconstruction process of the oil sands enters more greenhouse gas than *refining* it for consumption, that "carbon intensity" brought Canada advocates against the law and Amul Shah and Michael Wilson wrote to Gov. Aron Schwimmer asking to repeal its discrimination against its state's oil sands. "It's not the standard," they wrote, "it's only one of the standards to be effective, it has to discriminate. Otherwise you are missing a huge part of the carbon intensity," said Barbara Brown.

[illegible]

He was American long before this, but Alberta has a \$150-million tax cut and is putting the money into an environmental fund aimed at developing creative and sustainable technologies to create jobs and sequester carbon. "Our government is committed to that," says the premier. "We simply have a different perspective on the fact that we are a natural resource province in this great world."

senior official at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, to provide "strategic advice" and to help negotiate the legislation. (Bakdash was his son's partner in the firm, Irving David Bakdash, which had transferred to Canada, so watch for oil and sands and interest.) The mobilization has drawn for from U.S. veterans' associations. "It's discouraging to see there are actively opposed to protecting the tar sands when I think they know it's incompatible and will undermine our efforts to address one of the serious threats our planet faces," says Brian Barrow, who recalls seeing Canadian and Alberta officials popping up at hearings all over Capitol Hill. But (even the otherwise of the debate say the Canadian effort is not nearly enough. "We need help," says Caracosa. "I think it would be beneficial for the Canadian commercial interests to get involved in this battle. You have to get access to every legislature to educate them, answer any questions they have, respond to arguments in favor of low carbon fuel standards that Wisconsin and Polon and others are making. It's hard work. Inquiries research. I think it would be money well spent."

Alberta's and Canada's representations are currently touting two recent studies. One, by the respected Canada Energy Research, notes that the emissions profiles of the oil sands are comparable or better than some other sources of U.S. oil supply. And another report by the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations notes the (yes that the oil sands are a strategic source of energy and more secure than sources in the Middle East, Venezuela or Nigeria. It also makes the point that American economic interests are better served by importing oil from Canada—because for every dollar spent, more gets returned to the U.S. through oil-barrel trade and even direct profits. South argues that the U.S. will need to keep importing oil even as it threatens to lose a greater share of domestic sources. "Conventional oil is declining in North America continues to decline by at least three per cent per year. You have to replace that and right now oil sands are still your best bet," said South.

There are many other potential impacts of the legislation on Canadian energy products. The climate change bill includes a provision to band on three emissions-intensive oil products, rather than auctioning them, which reduces the relative attractiveness of the clean burning of natural gas over coal. (The legis-

lation's emphasis on developing solar and wind, however, could help mineral gas, since both those sources can be unreliable and natural gas is used to cover gaps in generation.) Canadian officials are also fighting to get hydroelectricity from Canada approved in a renewable resource. "We have the capacity to bring on as much as 15,000 megawatts of hydroelectricity over the next 25 years from Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba, and B.C. It's a significant contribution. We need to make sure that it is a continental regime that develops," says Preston.

Some observers say the Alberta oil patch needs to hedge its bets. "I think it's a great opportunity for Canada to start exploring Canadian

THE OIL SANDS WILL BE HIT, BUT SO WILL TRADE IN GOODS LIKE STEEL, CEMENT AND TOYS



ALBERTA representative in Washington, Gary Poir

energy market strategy," says Murray Smith. "Right now we import a \$3 million barrel a day from places like Russia, Algeria, Norway and the North Sea. With the new pipeline strategy going on, it is conceivable that we could send Alberta crude to Eastern Canada and we could switch on our own carbon profile." The other strategy, of course, is to explore new markets—such as sending oil to West Coast ports where it can be exported to Asia. "We think the U.S. is the natural market for Canadian energy exports. But if that good relationship was threatened in some way, and if it made sense in the market, then it is a good first step to export to other markets," says Ben Haffner, vice president for policy and environment at the Canadian Petroleum Producers' Association. That, of course, would mark a stark shift from the decades spent focused on the United States. It might also mean that U.S. climate legislation stalled in Congress oil being sold in Asia by tankers, which would increase emissions even more. "You'd end up with an outcome that would be less environmentally efficient and less carbon efficient," said Haffner. "I think energy is a reasonable word for that." ■

THIS LAND IS MY LAND

Trying to build a new home for Canada's elite commandos sparks a war of its own

BY MICHAEL FERGUSON • Frank Meyer lives on Meyer Creek Road. That's what happens when your family farms the same plot of land for 3½ centuries. They name the street after you. "This is heritage property," says the 60-year-old, possessing at his finch-plowed fields in Quebec West, Ont. "This is the property that was given to my grandfather when they fought for the British army against the Americans. This land was designated for us."

Today, the Meyer land is designated for something else: a new headquarters for Joint Task Force 2, the Canadian military's top-secret special operations squad. The Department of National Defence issued the green release back in September, announcing that the country's most elite commandos are moving to CFB Trenton, the same air base that has welcomed home the flag-draped coffins of every Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan. The relocation of JTF 2, including the construction of a included, \$249-million training facility, is the highlight of a half-



TROOPS FROM Canada's Joint Task Force 2, our secret special operations squad

billion dollar base operation that will fund much of federal cash into the local economy. But until all the needed talk about infrastructure, contractors and job creation—that is, until the arrival of the streets of freshly created construction jobs—DND is expected to experience a minor slump. When the special forces move into the neighborhood, the neighbors will be forced to move out. Whether they want to or not.

The military plans to build the unit's new sleeping grounds on 990 acres of private property located north of CFB Trenton. Federal bureaucrats have spent the past two years trying to convince the owners, 12 in all, to sell. Some have agreed. Some are holding out for a better offer. And some—Frank Meyer included—just want to be left alone. Unofficially, when the state takes rights to a plot of land, the owner is left with only two choices: sell now, or be expropriated later. Saying no is not an option. "If they don't need you, they get rid of you," Meyer says.

Officially, the force has not threatened to use any real-life legal. Expropriation is a legal power that allows the government to purchase any property it pleases, for fair market value—it always has that power, and the Department of Public Works says it remains committed to negotiating a "fair and mutually acceptable" deal with each owner. But that willingness to bargain won't last forever. A briefing note sent to Defence Minister Peter MacKay, and obtained by MacKay under the Access to Information Act, confirms that "expropriation, as a last available to the government, is being examined."

"I have slept everywhere about it," says Phil Jordan, whose 60-acre border the base. "Our world has been crushed. Somebody says who has decided they want to move JTF 2, I should give them time to consider what that was going to do to other people? They drove a red line around these pieces of property, and over time they everybody in there has been screwed."

For Jordan, spending not a minute is fighting away at the thought of losing his home. In this town—where the military is both source of jobs and source of pollution—he knows that many residents will surely sympathize with his situation. "Every time a soldier comes home in a casket, the business drives right by his house," says Jordan's wife, Kristy Chant. "Love it, and I don't." But now, she says, "people might not look at it as you say 'You're bringing up progress.' Well, guess what? The government is taking food off my table. That's the way I'm looking at it."

The government has been looking to expand CFB Trenton since 2006, when a competing Stephen Harper first promised to bring an airborne battalion to the region.



'THEY DREW A RED LINE AROUND THESE PROPERTIES, AND EVERYBODY INSIDE IT HAS BEEN SCREWED'



FRANK MEYER and his wife Kristy Chant (right). Frank Meyer, 61, says he's not going anywhere

By 2007, rumours began to circulate that Joint Task Force 2—the Canadian equivalent of America's legendary Delta Force—would be moving to the region's northeast. It's with a caveat: as Deputy H.E. on the corridor of Ottawa, in both 2001 and 2002, and in a more famous talk at a Senate committee, the site is "strategic as the arena."

In the military's eyes, Trenton is the obvious alternative. Located halfway between Ottawa and Toronto, the base provides immediate access to rail capabilities—and a jump on its way to roll out the welcome mat. Last fall, when DND finally verified the group, local officials began to upstate each other's words and boast about the economic prospects. Black Norfolk, the local Conservative MP, called it

"wonderful news for the people of Quebec West and surrounding area."

Except, of course, those who live in the immediate surrounding area. "We're being screwed by the wrong of where we are," says Jordan, sitting at his kitchen table with a Tim Hortons coffee. "It's stupid. They can take your house. There's no one person who land who should not be scared."

The future home of JTF 2 is a sprawling, 990-acre rectangle—the equivalent of 790 football fields—where dozens of lots (795 acres) was owned by the Sandersons, a family of cashing farmers. (Like the Meyers clan, they worked these fields for as long as the street sign bears their name.) It was

the fall of 2004 when the Department of Public Works phased Jim and Janet Sandbrook for the first time. "It was devastating for us," Janet says now. "Devastating."

Yet, as heart-breaking as it was, the Sandbrooks soon realized there was nothing they could do to prevent for inevitable. In March 2005, they moved from across the street because the first of 12 to accept the government's offer (according to the Public Accounts of Canada, also signed after his house and another for \$136k/12). Seven months later, another neighbor agreed to sell his house, and everything on the way for \$481,870. With his key losses, the Sandbrooks reluctantly agreed to follow suit. "We have to look at the big picture and make a sensible decision," Jim says. "I don't care how much money you've got, you can't fight the government."

Rather than take risk exposure, the Sandbrooks spent months negotiating a \$2.75 million deal that allowed their farming operation would be moved to nearby parcels of land. Ottawa paid a smaller sum: their market value for the land (approximately \$3,000 per acre) while deferring out nearly double that to cover long term of expenses, but not collecting gains based on redeveloping lands. Upon their exit, Jim says, a greening process. "A lot of trees," Janet says, but they knew it was the smart decision. "We were in the wrong," she says. "The business line is they're going to take it, so you have to co-opture."

Apart from the obvious inconvenience, the owners who don't want to co-opture are it: outside over the thing, selling them. The government made a third-party firm to assess their property, but it was not the minister made clear, most owners "expressed dissatisfaction with the appraised values." Among the dissatisfied is Louis Harel, who owns two acres near the east end of the message. The 71-year-old says his lot was appraised for less than \$1,000 an acre, despite the fact that similar properties in the area have been recently sold for \$1,800 more. "The appraisal was worth peanuts," he says. "I told [the government representative] I'd buy all the land in the county of Hastings for that price. That's what Public Works would charge a third of the in the fall. He won't reveal the specific dollar figure, except to say he threw the latter in the garbage."

Another owner who spoke to Maclean's

on the condition that his name not be printed, also thinks the offer is lousy. Jim says, "There is no way that I'm going to sell at the price they offered, so what can I do?" he says. "They're the government, and the government has a lot more power than we do."

It is right: according to Canada's corporate law, Ottawa is under no obligation to pay anything more than fair market value. But because the deals always profit to negotiate a settlement rather than dispute one, Ottawa's fiscal guidelines do give businesses the right to offer up to 15 per cent above the appraised amount, as well as use of public agencies such as moving costs, legal fees and cable installation. In the end, though, the government just can't show up with a blank cheque. It takes money, after all.

OTTAWA CAN'T JUST WRITE A BLANK CHEQUE. IT'S TAXPAYERS' MONEY.



JANET AND JIM SADBROOK: "YOU CAN'T FIGHT THE GOVERNMENT."

Phil Jordan understands that. He knows the deal is the lottery: when the military gives him the lot of J17, 3. But he is equally convinced that the appraised value (his 10,000 for his house and the 65 acres) doesn't reflect the true value. The garage alone—two stories, with an open studio for his brand-in-embellish, he says, as in the suite he built for his wife, mother. "They think that is just a house and we can just buy another one down the road," says Jordan, a welder by trade. "But we took that offer and we have today's house on one acre that we're not nearly as happy as we'd definitely put in a building, there is no doubt about it."

"What's the member one role of first choice?"

his wife adds. "Location, location, location. I've got it, I'm happy with it, and I want to stay here."

How much longer they can stay here is the uncomfortable question nobody wants to answer. At last count, the government has acquired five of the 13 properties (180 acres) but because the work of J17 is not finished as such, DND will not say when construction is expected to begin or when the troops will arrive. What would if held out owners will be disappointed, the military would only say it is committed to finish the government of Canada's rules and regulations regarding land issues in order to provide the Canadian Forces with the land and infrastructure needed to support operational requirements.

A spokesman for Public Works confirmed that the department still owns all 990 acres—and that discussions can't drag on forever. "The reality of the situation is that, DND, needs the land for a specific cause, and to have this negotiation just go on indefinitely would obviously not benefit anybody," Jeremy Link says. Does that mean negotiation is inevitable? "We are still in discussions with the landowners. In terms of dates and possible actions, we haven't received any further directives from DND."

Back in 2004, the MP who was in access to transport J17's arrival, would not speak to Maclean's. His spokesman, Thomas Birney, says that discussions have been forwarded since the owners' concern to the minister of public works, he cannot interfere with the process. It is not clear whether the fact that some of his constituents are being forced from their homes. "You have to weigh the interests of the best interests of the broader community," Birney says. "The impact economically on the city of Quebec West is so large that it would be very disappointing if this fell through. So it's weighing those things against one another and being open and talking with our constituents."

Frank Meyer is friends with Link. Sitting behind the wheel of his GMC pickup truck, dressed in blue jeans and brown workboots, he rows to never again say what his forefathers handed down—no matter the price. "I can't," he says. "It's fairly hard. I have no idea what I'm going to do. I'll just have to wait until that day comes." ■

BOB RAE'S SHORT TRIP TO SRI LANKA

"I think the Sri Lankan government wants to give the aid a shot. If you want to be considered a democracy, you want to be considered an open and transparent society, you need to be open."—Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh responding to Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. The Liberal foreign affairs critic was debriefed and deported by Sri Lankan authorities last week. Officials there cited Raj's alleged support of Tamil Tiger rebels.

THE PÉQUISTE PICK

Montreal's leading mayoralty candidate is a hard-left separatist

BY MARTIN PATRICHON • For most Montrealers, the most obvious political scandal is only as far as the truck and the newspaper. As long as both are taken care of, the people don't care who's in charge. In 2005, barely a third of eligible voters had ever casted a municipal ballot. This November's election was going to be a variation on the theme, pitting Montreal's charismatic former Mayor Gérald Tremblay against a quiet, former Liberal.

Not anyone. Labeled as the city's most vocal leader of the Vision Montreal movement, Lohmeier was a former Parti Québécois member of the city council. Much to the chagrin of Mayor Tremblay, Lohmeier's politics are so clearly dominated by a fanatical Quebec staple—language politics.

Harel has been a controversial hard-line leader and the face of the PQ for left bank for nearly four decades. A former social worker and lawyer, he joined the party in 1970 and promptly led a successful drive of its office workers. Even though René Lévesque had already aligned himself with the province's union, he didn't approve the move. So when Harel was first elected in 1981, the second election in the backroom, Appointed integration minister in 1984, he resigned less than three months later, along with all other ministers, in protest of Lévesque's following stand on independence.

He resigned as Jean-Jacques Paré's government minister, and municipal offices remained open the federal minister's office in 2001. A few years later, Lohmeier published his memoirs in a book named in the province, particularly Montreal's English community. Singling out Tremblay, Harel suggested "the

starch of colonialism" was waiting from the city's wealthier, largely English neighborhoods. (Harel made a point of not learning English as a talent, though she has since tried to learn, she has difficulty containing it in longer she should try.)

The English media has responded in kind to Harel's tirade. Twenty-five years ago, the *Gazette* blasted Harel for being a "discriminatory socialist," last week, the paper suggested Montreal would be only slightly worse off



LOUISE HAREL, once left René Lévesque's cabinet over his softening on sovereignty

SHE ONCE SAID SHE DETECTED THE 'STENCH OF COLONIALISM' WAFTING FROM WESTMOUNT

with Minister "Marc" Bourcier as a trap, referring to the former PQ's English leader now in prison for murder. Letter writers of both sides expressed outrage at having a mayor who isn't English, either were outraged at the outrage. PQ leader Pauline Marois piped up in defense of her close friend, police commissioner Gerald Larocque said Quebec was a colonial state. The election may be in 2009, but the rhetoric was right out of the 1970s.

Early indications are that the two's good start at victory. A speculative poll published shortly before Harel's announcement gave her a 20-point advantage over Tremblay, whereas quality-control image has been tainted

by recent charges of financial mismanagement of day-care. Alvin Martin, Ontario's first mayor following her announcement had Vision Montreal at 37 points above Tremblay's Crisis Montreal. (Montreal's parties still dominate

Montreal politics, though neither Vision nor Crisis are identifiably left or right, and usually aligns with the PQ's Liberal-PQ/NDP.) Harel says it's not enough to have a plan to do it, she said, other than wanting to fix the visionaries she says Tremblay has been doing his right past year.

Perhaps more convincing than the old popularity of a sovereign politician in a city that voted overwhelmingly against Quebec's separation in 1995 is Harel's choice of brother-in-law, Scott Lohmeier, who would likely be second in command in a Harel government, a research leader who once worked for Paul Martin and who has strong ties with Montreal's business community. Then again, it might be a perfect fit: Harel can place those past ally Harel's Péquiste past.

Moreover, Montreal's anglophone community, one of Tremblay's strongest bases of support, has effectively not moved itself. In 2005, 14 communities, all anglophone English speaking area for one, voted to "separate" from the city, meaning they vote in their own municipal elections. As a result, today, "separate" Montreal is a Swiss cheese collection of boroughs in which English have less of a say than before. Known as it is, though, Tremblay remains a formidable opponent. His voters are older, less educated, and more conservative than the rest of the city. That can be a challenge to be met to actually over a billion-dollar day. He also has a long-standing support amongst those anglophone voters who are still eligible to vote.

"This has to be a two horse race," a Vision Montreal strategist told Maclean's, worried that an anti-Péquiste pressure party will spring up and draw away Tremblay's vote. One potential candidate, who has no real base for Tremblay, has seen the last fall in the polls. "I don't want to be known as the guy who got Harel elected," he told Maclean's.

Harel also must contend with this first fever and fewer Quebecers, much less Montrealers, believe in her radical ideas. A recent La Presse poll found that 75 per cent of Quebecers don't believe Quebec sovereignty will ever happen. Fifty-four per cent, meanwhile, are against the idea entirely. Should she be elected, Harel will have to show how she can get it not yet to Montreal's young, indifferent to anything going on beyond the city. ■





HOW MUCH? Stephen Harper's government is actually spending an amount \$130 billion more!

Stop the shovels



By the time you read this, Canada has not been plunged into another election, it will be a blow to the campaign everywhere. At one point there was serious prospect of an entire campaign being fought on the question of whether billions of federal dollars had been "constrained," "suppressed," "unreleased" or, in fact, spent. Ah, for times to come to be seen.

To be sure, the government's second report on "Canada's Economic Action Plan," the predicate cause of this dilemma, was all of these terms and more, in an effort to impress the public with how serious spending has been raised "out the door" since January's hurried budget. The effect is quite striking, even without the conglomeration of spending programs with similar names as widely different variables with which the government further obscures its intentions.

Critics attempting to come to grips with the magnitude of the government's efforts to "manage" the economy must decide which number to be more impressed by: the \$130 billion (over seven years) funding Canada Plan, not to be confused with the \$16.1 billion funding Canada Fund, or the \$13.4 billion (over seven years) allocated including infrastructure to create jobs, or the \$4 billion specifically designated as Infrastructure Stimulus. But first it's overkill. The \$13.4 billion budgeted for infrastructure actually

has a "stimulus value" of \$16.5 billion, and that's before you count the \$12 billion in "assisted provincial and territorial action." With me so far?

Okay. Looking just at the current fiscal year—appropriately, one supposes, the point of the exercise is to spend the money as fast as you can—we see \$4.4 billion not aside for infrastructure projects, the "projected" "shovel in the ground" that are the object of particular repetition among the stimulus (the stimulus). Of that, the government says, about \$1.9 billion has been "accounted for." And how much has actually been, you know, spent? Not a clue.

Not that it matters. For all Michael Ignatieff's attempts to make this the defining issue between him and Stephen Harper, nearly what is more significant is the free utility of belief that this sort of "stimulus" is the cure for our economic ills. And yet if the opposition is right, and badly as any of the money has actually been spent, it only goes to show how pointless the whole business is. For, quite unaided by any shovel actually turning the ground, the economy has already begun to stabilize, even to show signs of improvement.

While the headlines tell us that GDP picked up in the first quarter at an annualized rate of 5.4 per cent, the worst quarterly performance since 1991, that's looking in the rear-view mirror. It does not tell us what is happening today. Looked at not as current figures, and you get a better picture of where we're headed.

Housing starts are up, as are housing prices. Retail sales have been rising for three consecutive months. Manufacturing shipments, after suffering huge declines through the fall and winter, have since stabilized. Earnings growth has been maintained, while the threat of deflation has eased. First employment appears to have bottomed out.

The same signs of tentative recovery are in evidence elsewhere. The latest figures out of the United States, on lowering construction and industrial production, are encouraging, if not exactly robust. Commodity prices are rising, with some confidence. There's a reason stock markets have been soaring over the last three months. But that reason has nothing to do with any "stimulus" spending that may or may not be somewhere in the pipeline. Instead, look to credit markets, where interest rate spreads—the premium riskier borrowers must pay over rate government bonds—have narrowed markedly. More than anything else, that reflects efforts by governments and central banks to provide liquidity to financial institutions and otherwise ease credit.

There have been quite massive, and dwarf anything done on the fiscal side, certainly in the economy. As of December, for example, the Bank of Canada had provided some \$10 billion in additional liquidity. Another \$10 billion was injected through the government's purchase of insured mortgages, more from the banks. By these and other means, interest rates have been held to historic lows: a prime rate of a 3.5 per cent, five-year mortgages at the 5.5 per cent range. That is the result of which measures are made, at least in the real world. As opposed to the kind of magical thinking our political parties have absorbed, in which a 21.6 per cent economy can be turned around merely because the government spends a few billion dollars on hockey arenas and overpasses.

Which is to say that such spending has no effect. But the real potential to do considerable harm. Indeed, what is most striking is how rapidly the production of negative effects of deficit finance have begun to show themselves. Already, some weeks after the budget was passed, the deficit projections have had to be revised upwards. Already, markets have begun to push interest rates back up. Already, the talk is of the need to increase what will be needed to bring the budget back to balance. Rising debt expenditures, anyone?

In short, while the stimulus is spending may arrive too late to do much about the current recession, it may be just in time to worsen the next.

ON THE WEB For more Andrew Coyne, visit his blog at www.mackenzie.ca/blogs/andrewcoyne

Why the poor aren't poorer after all

BY TOM HERGENROTTER — Many studies have come to the depressing conclusion that the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer—but according to a new report from the Fraser Institute, it's not happening here.



The study says the consumption rate of the poor isn't declining

In *The Economic Well-Being of Canadians: Is There a Growing Gap?*, Chris Sarlo, an economist at Nipissing University, argues that most studies of income inequality have been too narrow. The accepted figures show that the income gap between rich and poor has grown by nine per cent since 1969. But Sarlo says those reports don't take into account the "underground economy" of unreported income common in the repair, renovation and landscaping industries. Sarlo values the economy at up to \$95 billion a year, enough to seriously skew the statistics on income.

To overcome that shortcoming, he and his analysts looked at consumption. By doing so, he found that Canadians with incomes in the lowest five per cent have actually purchased higher numbers of new "big tickets" (big cars, air conditioners and dishwashers) than the highest five per cent since 1985. Since that consumption rate isn't declining, he says, it shows that the gap isn't getting wider. "Given the data we have, so stretched as it may be, it just isn't obvious that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer."

Not everyone agrees with Sarlo's happy conclusion. Amelie Walshaw, an economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, says the rich and poor report their incomes differently. She says the data may be skewed by the emphasis on consumption, claiming that the poor can afford more time-saving consumer goods because of a decrease in the price of electronics, not because their incomes are staying on par. "He's using his skills to define away the lines of inequality," she says. M

School fights to promote Jesuit values

BY TOM HERGENROTTER — Can a Catholic high school teach students that all religions are equal? Paul Donovan, the principal of Montreal's Loyola High School, says it can't be done. So he says only Jesuit school is taking the position to count over to new ethics and religious culture programs.

The new course was introduced by the Ministry of Education to teach about various religious traditions in Quebec society, with the goal of increasing tolerance among students. It teaches about Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as Judaism, various spiritualities and other religions.

But Donovan says his teachers can't deliver a religious course without a Catholic perspective—a perspective that promotes Catholicism ahead of other beliefs. "Our parents send their sons to us because of our mission and the values that we hold as a Catholic, Jesuit school," he wrote in a letter to the ministry. "It is one from conviction that we cannot honestly undertake the program... Without compromising some of our values."

Donovan asked for an exemption from the government's program before going to court, saying Loyola's existing religious curriculum is an alternative. But Quebec Solicitor General Michelle Courchesne has made clear that a class tilted toward one religion is not acceptable.

"Then of the mandate of the course is to present religion as an even-handed way," says Daniel Wozniak, a professor who consulted on the drafting of the new program. "It's a school has its guiding intention to educate children into the Catholic faith. It's not a part of their mandate to not to present all religions in an even-handed way."

Loyola's court proceedings have a case for the school may be months before a decision is handed down. But Wozniak says Quebec courts have historically been more to overturn provincial legislation—no chance here, once this fall, Loyola will be teaching that all religions are equal, whether it likes it or not. M

Fluoride safety fears rock Sarnia

BY KATHY ENGLISH — For 40 years, the city of Sarnia has reassured people that their tap water is safe. But now, after a year of debate, the city is asking whether it's safe to add fluoride to their drinking water. This November, the issue may finally be put to rest.

Like many Canadian water supplies, Sarnia began adding fluoride to its water four decades ago as an inexpensive way to ward off tooth decay. But for years, some have opposed the practice as unnecessary and possibly dangerous. "It's been an issue every year since fluoride was put in the '60s," says one Sarnia resident.

Mike Bradley, the mayor of Sarnia, Ont., which shares the water supply. That, last year, Bradley's Sarnia council passed a resolution to the city with a report saying that adding more fluoride did have adverse effects, and that the city should consider a decrease in allowed levels.

That's one of the reasons Sarnia's Fluoride Free Sarnia is ready to see fluoride go. Fluoridation was introduced in 1962, he claims, when fluoride was used as a component in the nuclear reactor dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "After the war, somebody came up with the idea that it was good for our teeth." Bradley says he sees the effects of over-fluoridation—fluorosis, or discoloration of teeth—as well as on his grand children. "This isn't poison," he warns.

But Bradley dismisses those claims as proof of a "big right wing conspiracy." Fluoride is integral to good dental hygiene, he insists. "I grew up in Australia and elsewhere with terrible teeth. I'm still paying the price. I'm very sure personally that I'm protecting children and their dental health."

Jack Goss, the water supply clerk, just wants to see the matter. He says that Health Canada is supposed to issue a report on its policies regarding fluoride in drinking water this fall, and he plans to call a special meeting for November to resolve the debate. But even that tentative proposal has the mayors squabbling yet again. Bradley says the board should hold a plebiscite on the issue in 2010 and let the voters decide. Meanwhile city calls that suggestion "irresponsible."

We have finally learned to fight'

Iran's regime took the election, but it also set the stage for radical upheaval

BY MICHAEL PETERSON • The students at Tehran University were trapped between the riot with clubs and then war.

Late Sunday night and early Monday morning, some 500 police and members of the paramilitary Basij militia stormed the university's dormitory, where students had protested against what millions of Iranians, along with most independent analysts, believe was a stolen election. Hardline incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared the reelected winner, with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, describing his victory as a "divine movement."

But the outcome was announced before any of the votes could have been counted, and the declared result gave Iran's main Islamic to the victory on the ground, with Ahmadinejad reportedly winning in the regional and ethnic strongholds of his opponents. While one poll taken three weeks before the election suggested Ahmadinejad was leading, polls closer to the election date indicated that reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi had surged ahead.

Even had the votes been counted accurately, this would not have been a truly democratic process. All candidates must be approved by the country's religious establishment, which does not allow liberals, leftists, and secularists to run. Like the apparent vote-rigging still drove Iranians into the streets in numbers that have not been seen since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Most marched in support of Mousavi, who promised more liberty with out directly challenging Iran's religious leadership. Mousavi officially received 34 per cent of the popular vote.

The regime responded by sending police and Basijian motorcycles to rush the crowds and beat them with clubs. Then they began shooting. The BBC obtained footage of a Basij member firing an AK-47 into a crowd of protesters. Iranian state radio reported seven deaths and claimed that "thugs" had tried to storm a military post. Hospital authorities reported eight deaths.

And so, on Sunday night, when the police and Basij charged up the stairs of their Tehran University dormitory, the students inside had nowhere to escape but out their upper-floor windows. Some jumped. Others threw stones and shouted "Death to the dictator!" When the attackers reached the students,

PROTESTERS turned out in numbers not seen since the Islamic Revolution of 1979



FORMER detainees from China were quietly resettled in a rather pleasant spot, Bermuda

MOVING ON UP

Finding homes for the Guantanamo Uighurs is no simple task

BY CHARLES GILLUM • If you're a former, freed-up detainee from the United States, you're a hot commodity. When the United States put a deal last week to send four Muslim Uighurs from Guantanamo Bay to Bermuda, it sold so behind Britain's back-net out of spite but compassion. Washington's no fan for Guantanamo's prison camp as its security. But even it knows London would benefit at being out of the loop on a matter of national security. Bermuda, after all, remains a self-governing province of the United Kingdom, which means foreign governments doing business with it are supposed to give more than ordinary courtesy calls on issues that might carry foreign policy implications.

But in the former detainees returned the beaches of their new island home, it became increasingly clear that Uncle Sam had spared Britain a massive diplomatic headache. The Guantanamo Uighurs are part of a Muslim separatist movement hailing from China for authoritarianism, which Beijing backs as a terrorist threat. Any country that took them in risked diplomatic or economic repercussions from China—though all accounts the most potent negotiable rule. By the week-end, senior U.S. officials were confirming that they had deliberately kept the transfer deal with Bermuda secret, guarding the U.K. with some much needed discretion.

Whether Beijing is buying it is anyone's guess. But America's use of discretion in the Uighurs' case is a measure of how far the global power dynamic has shifted since the war on terrorism began. With Congress reluctant to send Guantanamo detainees to U.S. soil, the Obama administration had been left seeking the globe for allies willing to host the detainees—emphasizing China's shadow at every turn. Canada, for one, declined several White House requests to take in some 60 of the Uighurs, having already welcomed Beijing by publicly protesting its arrest of Uyghur Gohar, a Uighur-Chinese cartoonist imprisoned in China on dubious accusations of terrorism. The Cold ally is widely thought to have damaged Canada's trading relationship with Beijing, and the prospect of making matters worse was evidently too much for the Harper government to risk. "They didn't want to compromise trade," says Mohamed Taha, a prominent Uighur-Chinese who lobbied on behalf of the men. "But this was a sign of weakness on Canada's part."

Certainly the case against the Guantanamo Uighurs was little better than the threat of

allegations that cost Cold War thugdom. The four men in Bermuda counted among 23 who escaped China to Afghanistan in the summer of 2001 but were picked up a few months later by Pakistani forces during the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. They were then turned over to U.S. troops and sent to Guantanamo, where a legal battle ensued over their status as "enemy combatants."

Five were subsequently sent to Albania, but the other 17 remained in legal limbo until a federal judge called last fall they must be released for lack of evidence. Sending them back to China was not an option; they would almost certainly face persecution. So the U.S. was forced to place them in distant countries with little or no trade with China. The South Pacific republic of Palau has agreed to accept 13, while Bermuda received the other four under a program for visiting workers. That program doesn't include from London, which has promised to review the terms of an agreement granting the island province control over immigration on autism.

To David Welch, director of the Hudson Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto, the whole saga is a sign of changing times. "China's growing importance in the world means people are paying more attention to it," he says, "and the Chinese people here." But others caution against blaming China for allowing Washington's attempt to resolve the Guantanamo dilemma—or other countries for failing to help the U.S. out. Having created the "legal black hole" of Guantanamo in the first place, the U.S. has responsibility to find a place for the detainees within its own borders, says Jeremy Philby, an international politics expert at Carleton University in Ottawa. "It's cowardly," he says of the White House's effort to hide the men on other countries. "Obama won't confront his own Congress on this, after their own court said let these people go. Why should anybody else solve the problem for them?"

The answer, of course, lies in the time-tested willingness of U.S. allies to lead Uncle Sam a hand, knowing it's one of their long-term interests. Eight years ago George W. Bush dispatched the bombers for Afghanistan, Washington needs more friends than ever. But if last week's transactions are anything to go by, old friends don't seem to be so ready helping out. And Washington knows it. ■



U.K. BEST-BEFORE DATES MAY EXPIRE
To help the environment by reducing the amount of food needlessly thrown away, the U.K. is considering adding every retail business's best-before dates. "There are a lot of people throwing away food because it's simply because we are not sure, confused by the label or not playing safe," says Environment Secretary Hilary Benn. But retailers are up in arms, calling for greater consumer education instead. Selling green, it seems, could mean that food does, too.

No more Bavarian separatism

BY KATE LEMAY • The German state of Bavaria (or Bayern) has long been itself an exceptional. Not only was it independent kingdom until 1918, when it became part of the newly unified German Reich, the southern state is also home to the Alps, Oktoberfest, and certain cultural traditions—like Bavarian beer. In fact, after its purchase for cultural debt, including its influence, that having been upon (and found the best of places in other parts of the country). The daily *Der Spiegel* goes to the



Don't you want Bavarians out, the poster asked? Apparently not.

as to tell Bavaria "a German version of Texas." Bavaria's no surprise, then, that Bavaria has been home to a separatist movement for decades. The Bavarian Party, which advocates for independence, once enjoyed a certain popularity in 1949, the first of the 1950s. Bavarians voted in the West German federal election after the Second World War, says Achim Harnisch, an assistant professor of political science at Carleton University. Ten in the recent European parliamentary election, which represented an opportunity of sorts ("since European elections have no direct effect on national politics, voters are [more] likely to experiment," he says), the separatist vote was not a slight rise.

What happened? Bavarian separatism may have had its day in the sun, but today, "hardly anyone seriously wants Bavaria to separate," says Harnisch, who calls the largest BP a "tiny fringe party." Germany's largest and oldest state, Bavaria has been an economic success story, and welcome to Munich, one of the country's wealthiest cities. As for the cultural differences, "they tend to be related to as a rather playful way," he says.

At least the BP got attention with its ad campaign, which saw a series of German posters featuring a man and a woman in traditional garb, waving goodbye as they walk away. "Don't you want to get rid of the Bavarians?" the tagline read. Apparently not. ■

Nice museum, but where are the exhibits?

BY MICHAEL PETER • If you build it, maybe they really will come. The prospect in W.P. Kinsella's novel *Shogun* has constructed a baseball diamond in the middle of an Iowa cornfield to attract the ghosts of his dead heroes to play there. Now Greece, too, has built a theme for the icons of its past in the hope that they will return.

On June 23, the new Acropolis Museum will open in Athens. The mostly stunning museum sits at the base of the Acropolis and will house artifacts pertaining to the buildings that represent the pinnacle of classical Greek civilization. The museum's main gallery is reserved for the sculptures that once adorned the Acropolis's Parthenon temple.

There's only one problem. About half of those sculptures are in London, and Britain refuses to consent them. They've been housed at the British Museum for some two centuries, ever since Lord Elgin removed them from the Parthenon under dubious circumstances, when Greece was ruled by the Ottomans, and sold them to the museum.

Greece has been campaigning to get the marbles back for decades. The British have given a variety of reasons to justify keeping the sculptures, including that Greece has never had a proper place to grow and display them properly. "The new state of the art museum returns that debate," Aristotle Soteriou, Greece's minister of culture, told *National Geographic*. "It just doesn't make sense that change."

For Soteriou, the Parthenon marbles are more than artifacts. They are an integral part of the Acropolis itself and need to be kept and used as a symbol of the Greek people and the Greek state.

And the "unique setting" for which they were made. "The return of the marbles is a sign of achievement in a people, the most cherished symbols of our cultural heritage, which is now returned that belongs for the whole of Western world," the minister of culture says. "The Parthenon sculptures represent a story. They need to be seen together. And this cannot happen as long as half of them are held hostage back in the British Museum." ■

India's really, really small apartments



Tata is marketing goods aimed at the bottom of the pyramid

BY PHILIPPE GONZALEZ • Tata, the Indian conglomerate that has built "world's cheapest" houses, announced last month that it plans to build 1,000 apartments in an industrial estate outside Mumbai. And like the \$1,500 Nana, the units in the Shakti Ganga development will be sold at rock-bottom prices.

Real estate prices in Mumbai are among the highest in the world—apartments in South Mumbai, for example, can fetch up to \$1,200 a square foot. Tata's apartments, by contrast, will cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 a square foot. They'll be downright tiny. The smallest dwelling will come at 228 sq. ft., with the largest topping out at 495 sq. ft. Along with the Nana, they represent one of the most aggressive attempts by a private company to enter the market on goods aimed at what management guru C.K. Prahalad calls the "bottom of the pyramid"—that is, the world's hundreds of millions of poor people.

While the quest for ultra-thin people holds them in the shantytowns and slums, it is well-established in developing countries, that's why it's not housing and cost is nothing that of "revolutionary," says Wendy Dillman, vice director of the University of Toronto's Rotman Institute for International Business. "Starting with a priority need and working back wards, [making a product people can afford] opens up all sorts of possibilities for entrepreneurs," she says. According to Raj Bhowmik, a professor at McGill's Desautels Faculty of Management, designing the better and middle classes in developing countries will likely prove more profitable for Tata.

Tata Industries CEO Ratan Tata describes the Shakti Ganga development as a "revolutionary" of the group's commitment to providing quality, innovative products for the common man. So far, Tata's had no trouble finding "concrete men" interested in acquiring them up. Just two weeks after announcing the project, the company already had 8,000 applicants. ■



Greece wants Britain to finally hand over the Elgin marbles



SAYING THAT China will keep lending to the U.S. is like saying heaven pilots only go up

CAN THEY PAY IT BACK?

The U.S. is about to go broke and they'll take us down with them

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • When Peter Schiff was making the rounds on U.S. cable news shows in 2007, warning about the collapse of the housing market, anchors and fellow guests briefly laughed in his face when he launched into his gloomy predictions. That kind of ridicule could never happen, they said. The economy was on solid ground in these rozier economic days, Schiff, the president of Dorland, Conn.'s Euro Pacific Capital, was repeatedly cast as a successful boomer who'd gone off the deep end.

Those days, a vindicated Schiff is back on the third show about what an even deeper message. The current situation, he argues, is only the beginning of a larger economic renaissance. The American economy has been destroyed by years of reckless spending and borrowing. And now, the U.S. government is so deeply in debt that at some point in the very near future, he says, its lenders—mainly China—are going to come to their senses and cut America off. “We can’t have one country that just borrows and runs a country that just consumes that’s supported by the rest of the world. It doesn’t work.” When this system collapses—and it inevitably must, he believes—reflections will be wild as the U.S. prints money to support its spending habit. Interest rates

will jump and everyone will suffer. The real day of reckoning is still to come.

This time around, nobody is laughing at Schiff. Anyone who has taken so much as a cursory class at America’s financial basics and seen the numbers of red ink has come to a grim conclusion: not only is the situation no longer sustainable, it’s rapidly getting worse. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the U.S. deficit this year will amount to \$1.8 trillion (all figures in US\$) and in 2012 the government spending about \$3.2 trillion more than it brings in for each of the next several years. That’s one of the more optimistic forecasts. Others say that over the next few decades, revenues will remain relatively flat while spending soars as demand grows for health care as health care for an aging population. The U.S. debt now stands at over \$10 trillion and will hit nearly trillion within the decade, according to Congressional Budget Office—a number so large that it will easily reach the entire yearly output of the world’s most powerful country. In short, America is about to go broke and every Western country, including Canada, will pay the price.

What’s alarming about this situation is the U.S. is just how quickly it could collapse. The country’s fiscal 2008, ended under a red-inked deficit. Back in 2005, the Congressional Budget Office was estimating that by now, the U.S. should be running a healthy

annual surplus—in fact it figured that when added together, the surpluses between 2001 and 2002 would total by a trillion. At the time, it seemed like a reasonable projection. After all, in 2001 the government recorded a surplus amounting to \$120 billion. But two important things happened since then that launched the U.S. into a very different financial trajectory and George W. Bush. The recession that followed in 2001 caused tax revenues to fall and spending on social services rose, taking a good bite out of those estimated budget surpluses. At the same time, newly elected president George W. Bush—emboldened by the surplus he’d inherited when he came to office—promoted to debt our meg and wide spread tax cuts, which cut revenue by about five percent. That was followed by new \$750-billion drug benefit program in 2005. To top it all off, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan caused defense spending to explode. (The bill for that war was in fact \$8 to be paid in just four years, America’s annual budget surplus was decimated and turned into a \$400 billion annual deficit. Since then, a healthy shadow of recovery, but when the recession hit in 2008, the deficit quickly plummeted back down to around \$400 billion.)

President Barack Obama hasn’t helped matters. Faced with a severe recession he has had to raise taxes but not policies that have piled debt on top of debt. Nearly \$1 trillion has been spent matching banks and the automakers (that’s about as much as the entire

government spent in all of 2008), and stimulus programs have added another \$400 billion to the government’s tab. “It’s hard to overestimate the massive spending spree we’ve had in the United States over the past few years,” says Brian Riedl, a budget analyst at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based research organization. Under Obama’s budget, the debt-to-GDP ratio will double to 80 percent by the end of the decade—a level not seen since the 1970s, when the U.S. was recovering from the Second World War.

But that’s not the worst of it. The biggest spending is still to come. With 75 million baby boomers retiring, there will be massive new strains on social services in the coming years. Three programs alone—Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security—will create a \$41 trillion liability over the next 75 years, says Riedl. That kind of spending would push America’s debt-to-GDP ratio to levels that have only been touched by bankrupt Latin American nations. To cover these costs, the government would have to raise the double income tax rates more than 10 percent—an option no lawmaker would ever consider.

These trends then, even if Obama’s after-the-fact spending packages stand down as planned and the economy recovers due to debt, there is still no hope whatsoever that this debt can be eliminated in the short term. This is an unrepentant position. After the Second World War, when the U.S. had a debt-to-GDP ratio of more than 100 percent, nobody

expected deficit spending to continue, and it didn’t, says Alan Auerbach, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who has studied the debt problem. The deficit during the 1980s was also quickly erased. “The difference here is that things will continue to unravel because we’re going to have rapidly growing entitlement spending and no responsible growth to cross under current policy.”

Add it all up and by the end of the decade, that interest payment alone on the debt will cost U.S. taxpayers \$800 billion a year. That figure will rapidly worsen, as the money spent on interest payments is added to the deficit, which in turn is added to the debt, which leads to even higher interest payments. “The whole system can start to feed on itself,” says Isabel Sawhill, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former budget official in the Clinton administration. “You get into a vicious cycle which can become explosive at some point.” By 2040, the interest payments will eat up 10 percent of government revenues, according to some estimates. Sooner or later, the U.S. will be handicapped by its debt, with a diminishing ability to pay for basic services, from defense to infrastructure to education. “The dismal state of American finance, and

the prospect of decades of ballooning deficits, have understandably started to make the country’s lenders a little nervous. The U.S. raises money by selling Treasury securities, largely to foreign buyers. Lately, those assets are being increasingly wary of the reliability of these investments, which were once considered the safest bet in the investing world. Demand to receive U.S. Treasury securities has been weak, leading to slight rises in interest rates—a potentially troubling indicator. Last month, well-known bond guru Bill Gross, founder of Pacific Investment Management Co., warned the U.S. could eventually lose its status as the world’s most reliable investment marketplace.

The biggest buyer of U.S. debt is China, which held \$761 billion worth of Treasury Securities as of March. Recently it has reportedly expressed concern about America’s ability to repay the loans. “Of course we are concerned about the safety of our assets. To be honest, I am definitely a little worried,” said Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao at a news conference earlier this year. “It’d be nice to see this opportunity being completed by the United States to honor its words, stay a credible nation and ensure the safety of Chinese assets.”

These are the kinds of politically loaded statements that keep up the alarm. What happens if lenders like China and Japan come to the conclusion that their investments in America have turned out to be bad investments? “The fact that we’ve borrowed all this money they loaned us, and the fact that by lending us money they’ve contributed to our economy being less efficient and less productive, they’re actually in a situation where the more money they lend to us the more they have to pay for their back,” he says.

Many scoff at the idea that the China will suddenly say “no more” to the U.S. After all, the two countries have had a mutually beneficial relationship for years. China lends money to the U.S. and the U.S. buys masses of consumer goods from China. What’s more, it’s a long-standing relationship and many doubt that China would want to upset the status quo. Schiff was no logic in that argument. “That they’ll keep lending indefinitely makes about as much sense as the argument that mid-nineteenth-century Britain would, so they’ll not finance,” he says. “Nothing that is unsustainable will go on forever.”

But the thing is, China doesn’t have to entirely cut off the U.S. to cause problems. Even if China decided to pull back slightly

DAVID HENNINGSEN

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

MACLEANS JUNE 29, 2008

there would be consequences. The U.S. would still find itself short of the cash it needs to pay its bills, and like a homeowner who finds a mortgage payment it would have to meet at some time, nowhere.

Regardless of precisely how and when this all unfolds, the dollar will inevitably become less valuable and mortgage rates will rise as the U.S. struggles to attract lenders. That will translate into inflation and higher interest rates for the average person, too. The cost of living will go up and the value of people's savings will decline. Canada would likely get dragged into the mess too, just as it was affected by the current downturn in the U.S. The question arises: severely this will affect. "We could have another economic crisis or we could simply have a terrible-in-the-woodwork act that as erosion of our standard of living and become a nation in decline," says Sanfill. As the very least, even here in Canada, the debt will act as a giant anchor, slowing what ever modest economic growth the U.S. can muster.

For the past five years or so, a small group of economists, researchers and former government officials have put on what they call the fiscal "White Up Tour." It's a kind of travelling road show aimed at raising awareness among citizens about America's looming debt crisis. "We've been frustrated that there hasn't been more attention paid to [the debt] and that steps weren't taken earlier," says the Brookings Institution's Sanfill, who's taken part in the tour.

Lately, however, the issue has been getting more attention, say some of the tour's participants. The trouble is, nobody has any faith that this new found interest will translate into any timely measures from lawmakers. The reality is no politically feasible solution to America's debt crisis in the near term. For now, the only way to avoid economic growth's contribution to the deficit is the U.S. is now facing, says Susan Irving, the director of federal budget analysis at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a congressional body that even has the government's spending and deficits. No matter what members try to do in their deliberations, she says, they can't fix the problem.

That means any solution boils down to lightly up-regulating tax bills and big spending cuts. To maintain the current debt to GDP

ratio and prevent a debt explosion from happening over the next 75 years, the government would have to curb its net revenue by 94 per cent or cut spending by 31 per cent, says Irving. It's clear that there's no appetite whatsoever for either of those options. The likes are especially daunting when you consider that health care costs in the U.S. have been growing

"It's just tragic that we're not dealing with this now," says Auerbach. "If we don't under the pressure because suddenly U.S. interest rates are going up, it's not going to be easy." But all of this is in the very near future, he adds. What's happened in Washington so far is modest, says Sanfill. "Adopt the budget... or cut the tax," she says. There are some signs that political pressure to curb deficit spending is growing (mostly from the opposition Republicans), but no agreement on how to proceed. Democrats generally fear the looming spending cuts while Republicans fear the taxes. "Those fears are understandable—but they should be outweighed by the fear of what will happen if we fail, if our debt overwhelms us, and if the fiscal meltdown comes," said House majority leader Steny Hoyer, in a speech last month.

Sanfill finds some cause for optimism in the fact that U.S. Americans, both inside and outside of Washington, are finally talking about the debt problem after ignoring it for all these years. That may be one of the few positive outcomes of the economic downturn: it has led Americans to slowly begin to acknowledge the elephant in the room. "The financial crisis has shined a lot of people that do economic calamities can happen," he says.

Schiff, the broken-hearted celebrity prognosticator, is concerned enough about such a calamity that he says he's now considering taking his message straight to Washington and running for a seat in the U.S. Senate. It's almost too much to expect, but he says he's not ruling it out. "I'm not ruling it out," he says. "I'm not ruling it out." Schiff, the broken-hearted celebrity prognosticator, is concerned enough about such a calamity that he says he's now considering taking his message straight to Washington and running for a seat in the U.S. Senate. It's almost too much to expect, but he says he's not ruling it out. "I'm not ruling it out," he says. "I'm not ruling it out."

For the Americans, the first step is to at least "stop digging," says the Heritage Foundation's Riccio. "Take a step back and think twice before choosing [Obama's] very expensive proposals." This is, nonetheless, a crucial need to get together and put some spending cap on the budget, he adds. Eventually, there will have to go up—on that point everyone agrees. The question now is whether the big jobs in the world of science, or in a more conservative way, with some forethought and planning.

WHEN SCHIFF needed of a housing crisis, they laughed. No one's laughing now.



One fear is a scenario in which the U.S. slowly erodes until it is a nation in decline

ing thousands percent faster than the economy. "You can't raise rates fast enough to catch up," adds Irving.

Conservatives know (first-hand how hard and painful it can be to wrestle down a growing national debt. In the 1980s Canada embarked on an effort to stop its much more modest annual deficit. It worked, but at a very high cost: We ended up with higher taxes and deep cuts to services like health care.

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OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

Horse trainers in Victoria, Australia, don't take kindly to the carelessness of jump racing jockeys' last month, following the deaths of three horses. But none responded quite like David "Buzby" Longden, who vowed to "ring the knuckles and start shoeing his horses straight away," then said video footage of "a few" horse heads to the racing minister. If the sport isn't reined in, After a review, Longden got his wish—along with a \$5,000 fine.

EMPLOYEE
of the
WEEK

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ECONOWATCH

A WEEKLY SCORECARD ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND



STEVE MARCH

After worrying for months that confidence would never attract, now financial pundits find themselves dealing with an overwhelming. For the past several weeks, expectations and headlines have been doing their best to dampen optimism, and step on a few of the celebrated "green shoots" that have dominated the discussion on Wall Street since March. There was Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of Canada, last week warning that the recovery still weak and fragile. "We shouldn't underestimate the scale of the challenge," he told a gathering of business leaders and academics in Montreal. Not to be outdone, CIBC surveyed central bank managers around the world who collectively manage \$15.5 trillion in assets and found they are highly skeptical of the idea that we're in the late stages of this economic slump. They expect rates to stay grounded for at least a while and consider rising unemployment a huge and continuing threat.

But for those who make their living swapping stocks, bonds and contracts, none of that skepticism matters as long as momentum remains in their favour. Consumer confidence is up. Stocks have been rising for more than two years. Long-term bond prices have begun to fall. Confidence prices are recovering. And all of this is happening despite the fact that economic activity is still feeble.

This is the root of a pervasive dilemma: rising confidence is crucial for the economy to recover, but too much optimism too soon may be the biggest threat to that ascent rebound. The higher the market drifts, the more extended such valuations become and the more difficult it gets for central banks to hold down interest rates. All that makes the marketplace vulnerable to disappointment and volatility. Like aftermath following a killer earthquake, another collapse would be as devastating to the original event, leaving a trail of rubble and shattered public risk taking from last summer's melt.

The risks were laid bare on Monday, when Canadian and U.S. stocks tumbled by almost three per cent in a single day for little apparent reason. That kind of volatility is quickly becoming a fact of life on world markets, as traders keep a finger poised above the panic button, ready to flee the markets at the first sign of trouble. Double the continued job losses, another round of mortgage delinquencies or dismal corporate earnings, for example.

For now, all the central bankers and economists can do is try to keep a lid on the gathering optimism without stuffing it entirely.

THE GOOD NEWS

De versus U.S.

A study by CIBC found per capita disposable income in Canada is rising twice as fast as in the U.S. As of the first quarter this year, disposable income was up more than 11 per cent, or \$1,600, from 2004. In addition to gloating about the pace, CIBC says we should expect the gap to widen even further after the recession ends.



Tiny spenders

The hunt for signs of life among consumers continues. In May, U.S. retail sales edged up 0.1 per cent, ending three months of decline. Sharp discounts on car prices have lured shoppers back into showrooms. (A similar trend is play-

ing out in Canada, where auto sales were flat in April, following a big jump in March, providing more evidence that the selling car business is becoming less Doomsday.) Unfortunately for consumers, part of the retail sales gain was due to higher gas prices at the pumps.

Chin up

No doubt U.S. consumers are spending more because they're feeling a little less devastated these days.

Routledge University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers found confidence rose to a one-month high in June. The index hit 69, up from 67 in May. Still, consumers had been hoping for a reading of 69.

THE BAD NEWS

How fast things change

Just two months after the World Bank came out with a dire forecast that the global economy would contract 1.7 percent this year, things have deteriorated substantially. It now says the world economy will likely shrink nearly three per cent in 2009.

Big Five blame

They may be back to their strength, but Canada's biggest banks are still facing the punch from the recession. At midway through last quarter, Royal Bank of Canada, Bank of Nova Scotia and Bank of Montreal owed nearly 4,000 jobs to a bad-to-crazy 360, compared to worse. In the U.S., where Bank of America Corp. alone has cut 64,710 jobs since 2007.

A lot poorer

Household wealth in the U.S. tumbled in the first quarter by 15.5 percent, according to the Federal Reserve. This is the seventh straight quarter Americans have seen their wealth plunge. The declines have been driven by falling home prices, despite an upsurge in the stock market. Little wonder that credit card defaults hit a record high in May.



Empty houses

There's no shortage of green shoots in the U.S. housing market. Unfortunately, they're the weeds sprouting up on the front lawns of the all too rarely finished houses. In May, 321,486 houses were foreclosed, up 18 per cent from the year before, according to RealtyTrac.

GRAPH OF THE WEEK

INFLATION GOES NEGATIVE—According to TD Economics, Canadian consumer price inflation went negative in May for the first time in 15 years. This marks the first year-over-year decline in the price of a basket of commonly purchased goods since 1994, and may signal the deflationary trend to worsen, despite the rising price of oil.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES



► Flying in corporate jets is still an extravagance that's frowned upon. Cusco Aircraft Co., the largest builder of business jets in the U.S., said that customers continue to cancel orders for jet planes. It was forced to lay off 1,300 workers last week. In the past seven months, it has laid off half its entire workforce.

► Palm introduced a new smartphone, the Treo, while Apple unveiled another version of iPhone, called the 3G. People can't get enough of the gadgets, now with their \$199 plus price tag. They sold 300,000 devices in their first five days on the market and Apple started shipping new iPhones to those who had ordered in advance. It warns that even unemployed job seekers want to stay connected.

► For years, Cusco Global Communications has been fighting restrictions on cell advertising. This week its case was finally scheduled to be heard in an Ontario court. But at the last minute, the company said the hearing will be postponed until this fall. That will give it time to deal with more pressing matters such as struggles to avoid bankruptcy and restructure a roughly \$4 billion debt load.

► Interested in buying a car company's General Motors is searching out buyers for many of its brands, and you don't need to be a big, multinational corporation to get in on the bidding. After unleashing Hammer and Ferrari, GM is said to be close to a deal to sell its Saab division to Koenigsegg, a Swedish company that was founded in 1994 by a 22-year-old car enthusiast. It still has just 41 full-time employees, who make a handful of luxury supercars each year.

BUY AMERICAN

Buy American? That's outdated, the saying is to be doing industry south of the border, not as a patriotic gesture. For firms in the nations in stimulus spending stays locked in the U.S. But around the world, protectionist sentiments are rising and many experts are warning America to move that political expediency and spending to local voters could mean a sleep-out on the global economy.

"We need to remind the Americans that we've got a multi-billion-dollar municipal and provincial procurement market in this country. Americans have unfettered access to it right now, but if they shut down their markets, there will be consequences." —Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff



"The idea that, in the current crisis, we are going to take taxpayer dollars and buy Chinese or other foreign materials for infrastructure construction is absurd. Let's stop being apologetic for foreign pipe dreams and put American back to work." —Thomas Gibson, president, American Iron and Steel Institute

"The danger in this environment is that you start to get tit-for-tat retaliation and it serves nobody's interests." —World Bank president Robert Zoellick

"Given the importance of organized labour to the current U.S. administration, I think we should be encouraging a little more co-operative effort (among us) on both sides of the border." —David Barnaby, former Canadian ambassador to Washington

"Decisive stimulus measures may have pulled us back from the abyss, but we have to remain vigilant that a protectionist backlash does not push us back to the edge." —Carsten Aschmann, European Union trade commissioner

THE ECONOGAUGE

Our weekly estimate of the prevailing mood among investors and consumers



THE WEEK AHEAD

FRIDAY, JUNE 19: Statistics Canada will release retail trade figures for the month of April. Some analysts are expecting a slight gain.

TUESDAY, JUNE 23: The U.S. will report the number of new layoffs from May including more than 50 people—that occurred in May.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24: The U.S. will report the number of new home sales last month. Even though the price of homes are down most industry watchers expect only a modest increase in sales.

OVERDRAWN by Jason Loggins

CLARIFICATION:



(REMEMBER WHEN WE LIVED ON MY BACK?)

Comet Holmes is only
slingshot from the PST tele-
scope, seen last year



The telescope dome
in Hale, Hawaii



A gravity tractor would
pull an asteroid (orange) into
the sun's orbit (black) and pull the
asteroid's acceleration toward it.

LOOK OUT BELOW!

A new telescope system will keep watch for killer asteroids from space

BY KATE LEMAR • In 1908, the skies over Siberia lit up in a sudden and massive explosion as an asteroid, 40 ft wide, had entered Earth's atmosphere and was breaking up in a multi-stage burst. Although the asteroid itself didn't make it to the ground, the shock wave and massive fireball that resulted destroyed 2,000 forest fires, laying waste to the ground below The Tunguska event, as it's called, took place in a remote area, so no human lives were lost. If the blast happened over Toronto, London or Shanghai, it would be apocalyptic.

Thousands of asteroids, most of them untracked, swirl around our planet some are over 10 km wide. "Right now, the most probable sources of warning we'll have for an asteroid impact is now, because we don't know where most of them are," says Robert Jedicke, 46, a University of Hawaii senior center originally from Waipahu, Hawaii. Jedicke is one of a team at UH's Institute for Astronomy that's working to change that. A new program, called Pan-STARRS, will combine the world's most powerful asteroid-tracking telescope with the largest digital camera

ever built. The first of four planned telescopes is set to begin its full scientific mission any day now. "In the past 100 years, we've discovered half a million asteroids," he says. "The first telescope alone should find a comparable number in a single year."

Asteroids, which are leftovers from the creation of our solar system, pepper our planet more often than most realize. "Basketball-sized objects come in every day, and Volkswagen-sized objects come in once a twice a year," says Dan Yeoman, who manages the New-mech Object Program Office at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Those under 25 in an diameter cause little damage. (Send sized particles hurtling up in the atmosphere can be seen from the ground as "shooting stars.") Events like Tunguska happen once or three times every 1,000 years. Asteroids one kilometer across or wider strike our planet only about once or twice every million years, but their impact is devastating on a global scale. Six million years ago, a 12-km asteroid crashed

into Earth, killing off 70 per cent of all species, including the dinosaurs.

In 1991, NASA set about discovering and tracking asteroids one kilometer in diameter or greater. Scientists knew they've found about 83 per cent of them, and that more than 600 are within the next century, but others loomed as massive and more dangerous—including powerful city killers, like the one at Tunguska—its another story. A 140-m asteroid packs about 310 megatons of equivalent energy," Yeoman says. "Even five megatons is a substantial nuclear weapon." The U.S. Congress is now pushing NASA to find asteroids that measure 140 m and up. It's these objects that Pan-STARRS will be hunting for.

Tracking asteroids, which are only visible by the reflected light of the sun, requires a telescope with a wide mirror to concentrate light on the filter the object, the larger the mirror that's needed. Instead of building one giant telescope, which can be prohibitively expensive, Pan-STARRS will combine images from four smaller ones watching the same patches of sky 24/7, the first of the four, is cranking up to its full-time mission now. All four telescopes, called PS1, will be in use within the next few years. At a cost of roughly

LONGER-LIVING WORMS MAY FEAR IMMORTALITY

Recent researchers have linked the lifespan of worms, C. elegans, with mutations that could greatly increase how long humans live. The scientists genetically engineered the worms' germline cells, which are involved in growth and behavior, but have a finite lifespan, to act more like reproductive ones, which are considered immortal, thus making the germline cells incredibly resilient. Right now, the technique can't work on animals too complex.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA/JPL; ART BY JAMES HARRIS

110 million apiece, they are as powerful as a single 5-m telescope, at half the price.

Within each telescope will be a 1.8-m mirror and the biggest digital camera ever made, with 1.4 billion pixels over an area of 40 sq cm. (Your average digital camera has about five million pixels on a chip just a few millimeters across.) "The sheer amount of information we'll be able to generate is amazing," says Jedicke, who notes that each telescope will gather about 10 gigabytes of image data per minute—enough to fill up a typical laptop in under an hour.

Asteroid detection isn't the program's only goal. Within the next 10 years, Pan-STARRS should be able to catalogue up to a billion stars that have never been seen before within our galaxy, the Milky Way, and a billion new galaxies, too, says project manager William Burgett. It will be searching for comets, brown dwarf/white dwarf bodies that are smaller than stars, and unknown planets. Burgett expects to find up to 70 new planets within the next few years. Pan-STARRS will also search for supernovae in distant galaxies. Because their exploding stars have a constant brightness, and their sizes diminish when they're at a greater distance, supernovae help scientists track the universe's expansion. The project, he says, will provide "huge amounts of information about how our universe works."

And what if Pan-STARRS finds an asteroid on a collision course with Earth? As long as we have enough warning, it shouldn't be a problem, Jedicke says. In 2005, for example, NASA's mission successfully collided a spacecraft called Deep Impact with a comet. "If we can do that, we can slam a bomb into it, and blow it up," Jedicke says, although he admits that shooting nuclear weapons into space isn't the most popular choice.

Scientists could also position a large spacecraft near an earth-threatening asteroid, creating a slight gravitational tug that would pull it off course. They may have a chance to test that method soon: a 276-m asteroid, called Apophis, is set to make a close approach to Earth 20 years from now. Computer models show that, if it passes through a specific 600-m gap, Apophis could swing back to strike the Earth in 2036. "If we can move it out of that loophole, just a little bit, it'll miss us," Yeoman says, noting that a gravity tractor might be a good way to do it.

How many other Apophis-like rocks are on a potential collision course with Earth? Nobody knows for sure. "One of my colleagues observed that there are more people working in a single McDonald's than there are trying to save civilization from an asteroid," Jedicke says. Pan-STARRS will help us find these asteroids, one would hope, before they find us. ■

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ROGERS

MACLEANS
MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL.

Did you hear the one about Obama?

No? That's because comics are giving the new Prez an easy ride.

BY JOHN DEWINE • Sooner than Obama's victory last November, late-night TV has Jimmy Kimmel stopped by Leggett's, a barber shop in L.A. He was there for a trim but also to test out, "on behalf of the comedy community," what type of jokes about the new President the almost all-black staff and clients considered offensive. Cries about Obama being a bad dancer are fine, they said. So are jokes about his haircut. But Kimmel was told, "His 'hair' is off limits."

The skit was a joke (a pretty good one, actually), but it illustrated a real concern among some comedians and late-night scribes heading into the Obama era. First, comics would be able to count on Vice President Joe Biden to regularly send them foot in the mouth, but Obama, unlike most of the comedians-in-chief who preceded him, wasn't a willing punchline. Most of the late-night hosts have grudgingly complained about how little the President gives them to work with. Comedians Chris Rock compared Obama to the unwellable Bill Clinton. "Look, you're young and virile and you've got a beautiful wife and kids," Rock told CNN. "You know, what do you say?"

For starters, how about smarter jokes? A poster made by Rosanne Barr, of all people, a day after Obama started the White House says Obama, she said, would "raise the level of intelligence" in comedy. No longer can late-night writers count on a president to write the show for them. The days of cutting and pasting burlesque or one-liners about sexual-life-doesn't-interest-me monologues were over. That, at least, was one of the premises that came with donating the junior senator from Illinois. So how then, halfway through Obama's second no-top day, are the late-night guys coping?

Consider, for argument's sake, the first week of June. After all, with Conan O'Brien moving into Jay Leno's chair on *The Tonight Show*, it marked the greatest change to late night in a generation. The other hours had every reason to be on top of their games. And there was no shortage of news: The U.S. government had just taken over General Motors and Obama was back from New York, where he'd watched the first lady away for dinner and a Broadway play on the public stage



(estimates ranged between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000). And yet, about the best Lerner was, Kimmel and O'Brien could manage, was a series of tired jokes about Phil Spector's hair and Dick Cheney's point-blank ring (yeah, they're still harping on the fact the former VP that he's having buddy in the face), was a crack about a jumpy street vendor after mistaking a pepper sprayer for the powder during the Obama's dinner, and the glowing a golden in Donald Trump's hair was one of the highlights of the trip for L.A. life. It was the kind of material that falls at old-age homes.

In fairness, there has been some pointed humor aimed at Obama. "They're down a lot of jokes about the bailout, some joke about how he's so cool, he's this coolish figure," says Russell Patten, a former stand-up comic who now teaches American studies at the University of Iowa. But two others, it seems, the President is being used to simply serve well-worn jokes about himself. George W. and Bill Clinton, he has dug. Some argue that a reluctance to poke fun at the boss during these tough economic times. Others have suggested that the group of middle-aged white hosts are afraid to take swipes at a black

IT'S ALMOST AS IF OBAMA THOUGHT HE'D TOSS THE COMEDIANS A BONE BY PICKING BIDEN

guy. "You don't want to appear racist," Buddy Winstone, a lifetime writer for *The Tonight Show*, told the L.A. Times. "You can't do the stereotypical thing." Then there's the claim that it's a big, liberal conspiracy, a theory belittled by the fact that most in the comedy business are Democrats. But all this, says experts of political humor, is a joke. "What it really comes down to is the lack of an angle, an easy hook. Obama doesn't cross racialized with the English language or accents, which makes him tougher to write." It's a telling indictment of [the mainstream network shows'] approach, which has to do with superficial things, personality stuff," says Patten, author of *Strange Bedfellows: How Late-Night Comedy Never Drove into a Joke*. "Obama

doesn't fit their easy way of doing things." Even Saturday Night Live's Fred Armisen, a master comedian, hasn't quite perfected Obama in the way Dana Carvey called Bush Sr. and Will Ferrell called W.

By looking to the source, the Comedy Central guys—namely Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert—are doing alright. Although, Patten says, Stewart "has gone out of his way to avoid looking like he's in the tank for Obama to the point that he's done some cheap, false equivalence stuff suggesting Obama is 'just like Bush.'" During the 2008 presidential campaign, Stewart and Colbert circled around jobs of Obama then John McCain, Sarah Palin and George W., according to the Center for Media and Public Affairs. And that trend continued this year. In contrast, Leno, O'Brien and Letterman said more jokes about George W. (129) than Obama (111) between Jan. 1 and March 15—apparently, the height of Obama's rise. Overall, most jokes during this time have focused on his "rock star status."

Meanwhile, his VP has become a favorite target. "It's almost as if Obama thought he'd lose his vice-presidential bone by picking Biden," says Robert Thompson, director of the Walter Center for Ideology and Popular Culture at

the University of North Carolina. Obama counted comediennes of his own with a comedic slip, when he appeared on *The Tonight Show* in March and acquired his leading skills to those of special Olympics. During, some late night appearances, however, he's seemed to be in total control, often landing some of the best lines. On O'Brien's second night hosting *The Tonight Show*, he showed a clip from an interview Obama had done with NBC news anchor Brian Williams during the sit-down, the President dismounted that the transition from Leno to Conan had been a hot topic at the White House. "It just wasn't [Conan] to know," said Obama, "that there is not going to be any bailout coming out from Washington if he screws it up." A week later, Obama was at it again, appearing via satellite on *The Colbert*



JAPAN: THE CRISING SUMO FESTIVAL
Two sumo wrestlers lift up babies, shake them gently, and make wavy faces and the toddlers start wailing—the limited help you'll see. This happens once every year at Tokyo's 600-year-old Rikuseino Festival. Despite the apparent trauma, the contest is meant to bring good health. It's based on a proverb that says healthy children should cry—a lot. Whether out of fear or pain, almost 100 babies are held high each year.

OBAMA and Jay Leno, off set at the Tonight Show

Syracuse University. "When comedians don't have the time or inclination, they can always play the Biden card." Besides, Biden jokes are a no-brainer.

Disco doubt to the President's popularity, some hosts have faced a lot of resistance from their audiences. After one joke that didn't go over well, Stewart explained that it's okay to laugh at Obama. Unless, of course, the phrase is your taste. CBC received more than 1,000 complaints following a New Year's Eve special *Radio-Canada*, which included a list of wildcards of the hosts joked how a presidential inauguration was a "big deal."

When the comedian made fun from Reagan or Clinton, Obama knew how to play the game. When SNE made fun of Ford, or H. W. Bush, it seemed like his young fans were making up stories about him. When SNE made fun of Ford, or H. W. Bush, it seemed like his young fans were making up stories about him.

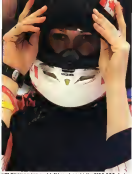
While it hasn't happened yet, Thompson agrees the smartest thing you can do right now is "good for society." But he doesn't think it's a bad idea to have a bigger laugh. "Most substantive doesn't mean more funny," he says. Maybe that's why the more comediennes have are holding on to tightly to George W., Clinton and, recently, Cheney, who asked to go away is providing comedians a "connection to their good nature," says Thompson. But it's only a matter of time, he says, before Obama says up. "It's inevitable," says Thompson, "because we're being governed by some delusional perfection. And, as much as some people thought Obama was, he's not."

GOLD DOESN'T COME CHEAP

Athletes and B2ten make a business case for Olympic glory

BY KEN MACQUEEN • It was the spring of 2007, early days for the elite, little-known band of amateur athletes known as B2ten Barry Hick, a Calgary merchant banker, made his whereabouts public. He had, as expected, assembled a group of elite-minded Calgary business leaders to hear a pitch. The star at the breakfast meeting was Jennifer Hill of Sparco Group, Aka, a gold medalist in cross-country at the Team Olympics and, not surprisingly, a co-owner student at McGill University. Also there was her coach and boyfriend, Daniel Kirk, and J.D. Miller, a Montreal-based consultant in banking, mergers and acquisitions, and a friend and mentor to both. There were the head, soul and backbone of B2ten, an organization they founded to shake up amateur sport funding by convincing Canadian business leaders with Olympic-level athletes—not to sponsors but as donors and investors. The “B” stands for business approach to investing in performance. That day they gathered on behalf of Helen Uperton, a Calgary bedsheet pilot with huge promise. Hick recalls Uperton was arrogant, and then she spoke.

“I need a lobbyist. I need a mentor. I need mentors,” says Uperton, mulling her shopping list two years later. As a private equity guy, Hick pitched business plans every day. “The first question I ask myself is ‘my goal,’” says Hick, “are there the right people? Check the box. Are they passionate? Check the box. What’s the value proposition? Well, it’s easy to see the value proposition here [Uperton, sitting with an audience of elite, finished fourth at the Team Games, a day after a second off the podium]. Is there a chance of success? Can I make a difference?” Check, and check. The meeting lasted 40 minutes. “That’s the pitch,” says Miller. “You get a lot of support, but not



HILL: An upstart couldn't have brought the \$100,000 deal

ing the return. You don't get any rights. You're doing this because it's the right thing. It's about the people.

The group gave a four-year commitment, and within weeks a top-notch coach from Mexico was on his way to Calgary. Total cost in purchase and maintenance: \$100,000 plus in each country across the country. B2ten has raised \$1 million, all of it spent to fund a pool of choice “athletes”—athletes of great ability but specific career needs. “Canada is notorious for its individual treatment for all people,” says Uperton. “It’s not easy to find a tremendous quality to have. In sport, do you want a whole bunch of people who can finish four to eight? Or do you want a couple of people who can stand on the podium?”

The idea was viewed suspiciously by the sports establishment, says Hick, not to push Olympic play by creating off-Canadian beds and building a private sector center. Most, though, one day, athletes are one away, says Uperton. It’s about participation and growth. He says, “Let’s produce 10 medals and let’s let the kids order for it.”

An authorized external news coach in 2002, he founded Hill into an Olympic coach in Salt Lake City by day of a post. The next

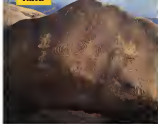
four years were spent building an independent training program for Hill. The seed money was underwritten by a group of Edmonton business leaders, led by veteran Doug Cox, a Hill family friend, and including Ken Lowe, GM of the Oilers. J.D. Miller came on board gathering donors in Montreal, where Hill was training and attending university. Hill recalls feeling “100 per cent ready” in 2006. “That’s incredibly powerful to be that confident,” she says. And, for Canadians, all too rare.

Post Games, the Coach and Miller decided Team Hill would expand to other athletes in Asia, representing either or more of Canada’s top medal hopefuls.

Just last week, a Toronto group, including Star Jets, wanted \$100,000 for figure skater Phyllis Park, China, to cover the cost of training with his Florida-based coach, Steve Nordin. However, world silver medalist this year, is another prospect. The list goes on. Alexander Babin, the team’s world champion in figure skating, Hill, at times, gifted champagne to athletes. Cernich and Babin’s hockey gold medal in Sochi. The donors—wanted to include such names as Desjardins and Babin—tend to say out of the sports headlines, though not out of the athletes’ lives.

Babin says the donors feel the need to say out of the sports headlines, though not out of the athletes’ lives. Babin says the donors feel the need to say out of the sports headlines, though not out of the athletes’ lives. Babin says the donors feel the need to say out of the sports headlines, though not out of the athletes’ lives.

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A ROCK: angraving of the Buddha in northern Pakistan, monastery ruins

RADICALS VS. BUDDHA

Pakistan's Buddhist heritage is under attack by the Taliban

BY ADAM R. WASSER • The theory is so thick as the dust clouds swirling over the ruins of the 10th-century Buddhist site of Takht-i-Bai. At the foot of the mountain, a small, ancient monastery, known as A, lived a wealthy student, into the middle of explaining what it is that drives him to the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site. Each group of monks and quiet surroundings when someone walks up through the stone walls and gates. “It’s peaceful up here,” he’d been saying just a few weeks earlier, watching the horizon in the direction of the Swat Valley. “You can escape all of the noise and stress that goes on down there.” The valley of Swat is a small, ancient monastery, known as A, lived a wealthy student, into the middle of explaining what it is that drives him to the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site. Each group of monks and quiet surroundings when someone walks up through the stone walls and gates. “It’s peaceful up here,” he’d been saying just a few weeks earlier, watching the horizon in the direction of the Swat Valley. “You can escape all of the noise and stress that goes on down there.”

For a time, when the Taliban were in control of Swat, a few short weeks ago, that serenity appeared to be under threat. Their ban of Buddhism as an un-Islamic faith in the March 2001 destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, officially ordered by the then-ruling Taliban regime of Mullah Mohammed Omar, and the more recent November 2007 destruction of a seven-story tall Buddha statue in the Bamiyan region of Swat, are examples of what could have been in store for Pakistan’s Buddhist heritage.

What were once monks’ residences. None of them can tell you much about the profile history of Buddhism in Pakistan and the role Buddhists played in bringing peace to a region potentially beset by violence. They can tell you little about A, the third-century BCE emperor of the Mauryan dynasty of India, who, after witnessing first hand the killing fields of his army’s experience, converted to Buddhism, banned war, and spent the rest of his life actively promoting a Buddhist inspired grain of peace and brotherhood. His story reads like a life lesson in pacifism. The property he owned stayed after his conversion to a legendary. Some of the legacy remains in Takht-i-Bai, in the quiet, contemplative mood of people like A who came there to clear their minds.

For a time, when the Taliban were in control of Swat, a few short weeks ago, that serenity appeared to be under threat. Their ban of Buddhism as an un-Islamic faith in the March 2001 destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, officially ordered by the then-ruling Taliban regime of Mullah Mohammed Omar, and the more recent November 2007 destruction of a seven-story tall Buddha statue in the Bamiyan region of Swat, are examples of what could have been in store for Pakistan’s Buddhist heritage.

officials don’t know how badly, at all, ruin similar to Takht-i-Bai have been besieged during the Swat offensive—the region is still too dangerous for those who would be killed would be a grave blow, not only to the world’s Buddhist heritage, but, according to some Pakistanis, to the identity of Pakistan itself. “It’s something from the past, and the Quran tells us the past is important to Muslims,” says Rafiqul Karim, a guide at the Dharmapala Temple in Tullu, 30 km north of the capital Islamabad, where some of the Buddha’s ashes were placed by Emperor Ashoka. “There are many people who come before the Prophet Muhammad. Some people have believed Buddha was one of them. He speaks of equality between men, so does Islam. He speaks about love, so does Islam.”

For Muslims like Karim, paying tribute to Buddha is no way contradicting their Islamic faith. But even he admits he wouldn’t speak up to other Muslims about his beliefs. “You never know who might be listening.” His caution is understandable. Even though the Taliban are on the run in Swat, it’s not inconceivable that one day Dharmapala and Takht-i-Bai’s Buddhist sites could be occupied by gun-toting Islamic radicals. Against such brutal cruelty, Buddhism is unlikely to stand a chance. ■



CUSTARD-COVERED KIDS CRUSH RECORD
1250 plus were checked in a mass of over 200 giggling kids in the world’s largest ever custard pie fight. The event took place under two minutes—giggling kids, organizers and organizers of the big pie-fest. It was part of a children’s festival in Northern, England, an event its organizer says is about “being silly and enjoying yourself.” The record bested last year’s fight that saw over 200 students lining up at the University of Birmingham.



LIP SERVICE FOR ALL THAT ASKS YOU
Thousands of people flood a small Vietnamese village every day to try to get a word from the late Ho Chi Minh. The water he left his mouth with and then spray behind his magic lips has the power to cure all diseases and ailments. It’s called a miracle, but high health care costs made it called “heaven’s powder.” Some people even quit their medications in favor of Ho Chi Minh’s 19th-century.

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Name n date. I'll be there.
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DRAKE SUPERIOR

The former 'Degraass' actor is being hailed as the next hip-hop superstar. Is he also Rihanna's new man? BY SHANDA DEZIEL

music

Drake may be the first rapper to talk about how his career disappointed him. The former *Degrassi: The Next Generation* star used his acting money to lease a Rolls-Royce Phantom in order to fit into the world of hip-hop—and he's not too proud to admit, in his song *Up Without Me*, that kind of thing doesn't go over well at home. "And my mother-in-law used to tell my children and I not push about the house down / She said I shouldn't have said I have the crown / But I don't want to feel the need to wear diamonds around / So she wonder where my mind is / Accounts to the owner / But yet I'm riding round the f-ckin' city like your tightest."

For Drake, who is being hailed as the next hip-hop superstar, it must be difficult to reconcile ailing-out lifestyle with home—which is Forest Hill, a top, professionally Jewish neighborhood in Toronto. Born Aubrey Drake Graham (he goes by Aubrey Graham when acting, and Drake when singing), his parents split when he was young. His father is an African American musician who lives in Memphis, and his mother, who is white, raised him in Toronto, where he was bullied. "I didn't go to Hebrew school though," he told Peter Rosenberg, a popular Jewish hip-hop talk-show host. "I started collecting the money."

At 11, he landed on the Canadian teen melodrama *Degrassi*: TNG playing Jimmy Brooks, a weed-dealer kid and broken ball star who ends up in a wheelchair after a basketball disaster—where Jimmy had befriended—shoots him in the school hallway. Not exactly

the kind of ball it would be he can brag about to his hip-hop peers. Like his mentor Lil Wayne, who has a few weapons around and claims to have shot himself accidentally with a .44 calibre when he was 12.

Drake acknowledges his less-than-thug upbringing, joking to *Killing Star* magazine that he has to overcome the three strikes against him: "Being an actor, light-skinned and Canadian." So far, it's all been easily overcome. Record company Universal and Atlantic are rumored to be jockeying for him, with a \$10-million upfront figure being thrown around. His coming-out show at CIBC in New York City led all the big names in the crowd, including Kanye West, Lil Wayne, Sean D and Tobi Keith—and was positively reviewed by the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice* and *Killing Star*, who named him the "hot test MC in the game" and a "21-year-old prodigy."

While Canada has never produced an A-list international hip-hop star—sorry, Maestro Fresh Wes—rather Drake's Canadian roots are his peers as a teen soap have deterred legends like Dr. Dre and Jay Z from collaborating with him. And serious, successful movies are more too bothered by the use of the homogenous face. But check the schedule for the gossip about how Drake is the new star in the dramatic life of young R & B star Rihanna. Despite PDA sightings at bowling alleys

and celebrity record release parties, the official word is they're just friends, and he's wearing sunglasses conventional for her. It almost seems possible when he boasts on one song, "Bitch as big I could probably add a black disc."

Up until now though, he's recorded and self-released four "mixtapes" over the Internet—also controlled by his dad. Dependent money. The last one, *So Far Gone*, came out in February and the Toronto release party was hosted by NBA superstar LeBron James. The album itself, according to *Killing Star*, was "critically-lauded for its mix of melody and delirious lyrics. But some denied the work as a knock-off of Kanye West's *Late July*." *Heartbreak* due to Drake's growing and female-fueled numbers. "The next of him is already titled *Thank Me Later*, and the hottest collaboration has been lined up—Drake just needs to decide on a label."



DRAKE WAS wheelchair-bound Jimmy Brooks in *Degrassi*: TNG

herby-fitting influences in his life. He spent summers in Memphis with his father, Dennis Graham, who was a drummer for Jerry Lee Lewis and friends with Muhammad Ali. His grandfather, he says, helped Louis Armstrong. One of his uncles, Larry Graham, was the bower in Sly and the Family Stone and played with Prince. Another uncle, guitarist Mahon "Tazoo" Hodges, who co-wrote Mike

DRAKE: PHOTOFEST; GROOMING: JEFFREY M. COLEMAN



PEOPLE ARE so sorry for Betty, says the Archie writer, that they've started 'writing to her in person with letters of encouragement'

They're furious he chose Veronica

Even people who didn't realize they were still fans care about Archie's marriage proposal

BY JAMIE A. WEISMAN • Archie does more gimmick stories than just about any comic today. The biggest gimmick of them all comes this August, in the 500th issue of the comic *Archie* (Rite), when the world's oldest teenager proposes to her would-be second heart, Veronica (part of a six-issue arc that takes place after they graduate from college). When the story was announced, it created what no writer, Michael Ustin, calls "a firestorm of media attention." It's the latest in a recent string of Archie-related events the publisher has closely done: "New Look" stories with the character redesigned in an uncommonly realistic style, and another comic, *Archie: the Punk* (also Rite), was billed as the first ever look at the character when they started at Riverdale High. For a comic that's been telling the same stories for 67 years, *Archie* sure is making a lot of changes—even if everything will probably go back to the status quo eventually.

Why does Archie feel the need to shake things up? Partly because an unusual story can get heavy promotion in the press. Unlike a *Barney* space producer who coaxed and wrote the marriage arc (drawn by long-time *Archie* artist Sam Goldfinger), told Ustin, that he was astonished by all the publicity from people who would undoubtedly not have shown to say about comics. "They letter called about it on his last *Thunder* blow," he says. "Katie Couric came to see her segs all day. Major magazines and newspapers are running editorials on it. 'Wonderful thing of all,' we've gotten coverage on all leaders." This would encourage a side piece every that sticks to the formula. That's why Victor Godefrid, *Archie's* long-time editor, says that these longer, change-of-pace stories are necessary to "remind people we are out there."

A lot of people spin on this would be that Archie needs to use gimmicks to get noticed, because the regular stories no longer attract as much interest as they once did. Some of the older *Archie* stories now have a high reputation among comic connoisseurs, particularly those of Harry Lacey, who drew the *Archie* title in the '60s and '70s (he drew *Betty* and *Veronica* (made and left it up to the colorist to draw them). Those artists, still being printed in digest, can sometimes overshadow *Archie* in the artist. Some readers may even know that the company is still making new stories: Ustin says that "you hear people saying 'I didn't know they were still being published.'" It may be that *Archie* needs to do something a little different to set on current status space, just like *Superman* can no longer stick to old-fashioned stories about saving Lois Lane from danger.

The way Ustin sees it, though, this story isn't just a publicity opportunity, but an *Archie* story. "This is a creative and innovative people," he says to the *Archie* staff. "For them to explore different aspects and differences in the lives of these people, it's wonderful." And never discount the power of shock value. Ustin recalls that when he pitched the idea to Goldfinger, "Victor said, 'What do you have in mind?' I said, 'Veronica gets married.' He said, 'Yes, really?' That's the reaction, a gimmick comic wants to provoke into potential readers they're skeptical, and then they buy it. ■

STOP THE PRESS!... THE LATE, GREAT ECONOMIST

A column writer included in *Harvard* died in a fire of great debt economists. He is, in fact, alive and well and a professor at the University of Maryland. "The Guardian on June 5, announcing for a minute made by economist editor Larry Elliott. On June 5, Elliott wrote a column in which he tried to put together a 'financial economics' done out of dead financial experts, and included only in his dream team.



CAMOUFLAGE: From Berlin's Café in Coblenz, a partnership with the Imperial War Museum in London, continues until Jan. 1, 2010

What to 'see' in Ottawa this year

A show at the Canadian War Museum points out artists' long association with camouflage

BY JOHN GEDDER • There was a moment in 1914 when blackbirds didn't have to be the noisiest thing a punk rock could wear. Punk was fading that year, at least the breed that surfaced in the late seventies, and quietly sighing rock was rising. But in a last full-throated yelp, the Clash put out what would be their final record, *Guns*, and, as the drummer, the London band's perfect lead singer, started showing up for concerts in camouflage. Strummer died in 2002, but his '83 comic press, incredibly, have survived. When I came upon them in the new *Camouflage* show at the Canadian War Museum, a not very new wave of nostalgia crashed over me.

Don't imagine a happy anniversary. Strummer's camouflage troupe took to have come by way of Canada's story. They have the same story, nearly opposite cut profile of the war doesn't have to mean typically photographic wearing. It didn't matter if they didn't look all that authentic, by the time Strummer discovered camouflage, as the museum's display of military camouflage, its connections had long since crossed from army to pop to fashion. If his pants were meant to convey a fighter's toughness, they mostly managed to be plain, unadorned (punkers) and unattractively hip.

In fact, the show, which originates at the Imperial War Museum in London and runs in Ottawa until Jan. 1 next year, engagingly shows the history of how artists' sensibilities have been tied up with camouflage from the very outset. Camouflage originated in the First World War, when bombing from airplanes and long-range artillery proved devastating against easily identified targets, like troops and ships and warships. The French

realized first that they needed to break up the profile of men and equipment against battlefield backdrops. This was logically work for artists. Among the most remarkable objects in the show are the First World War notebooks (looking tragic under glass) of the French painter André Mare, whose death of a camouflaged field gun is remarkably subtle.

By the end of the war, all major combatant nations had established their own camouflage units. But this remained a sort of handcraft—banners were hand-painted and groutwork individually splattered—until the technology to mass produce fabric with irregular patterned designs emerged in the late 1920s. In the Second World War, camouflage became commonplace. The exhibition shows off a wide array of so-called "European pattern uniforms" that followed, ranging from the jungle greens and desert browns to a white Canadian uniform meant to disappear against snow.

Perhaps the most striking part of the show is the section devoted to so-called "dark" painting on Second World War ships. The designs, which can look like gnomes' camouflage, were meant to make white vessels vanish against sea and sky. Among the well-known camouflaging of Canadian additions to the British fleet is a small oil painting of a battleship.



NOW SHOWING... THE ULTIMATE DOLLHOUSE

British miniature artist Rick Dickinson, 48, is selling a hand-built dollhouse to a Canadian firm—and it's \$37,000. It costs more than some real homes on the U.K. market. The 23-room dollhouse, which has servants' quarters, a games room, and a library with over 1,000 individually bound books, took him over 15 years to create. Even the wallpaper and hand-painted glass. "You build building it," says Dickinson, who'll use the money to tour Niagara Falls.



Never mind fewer cafés and top chefs, even some classic cheeses are becoming extinct



and Korean health
who couldn't afford
everything from ad-

As River can hear the fat lady tuning up. **B**

...RARE RICE WINE
 enough. Take a bottle of rice wine, add a few dried wild mushrooms (sauté them for no more than five minutes), pour in a few drops of rice wine, and extremely high proof—Chinese rice started being brewed by poor villagers as a doctor. It's still thought of as a cure-all for colds, flu, indigestion, liver disease,



Four women form a group dedicated to allowing each of them to realize a dream

Moide wanted to go to Africa but was afraid to travel alone. "It was a lifelong dream. I don't typically share really heartfelt things and here I was sharing it with the group and this was the beginning. The group believed in me and then I began to believe in myself. When you speak about a dream, it gets more substance. When it's just in your mind, you can put it behind." Moide's dream of Africa had sat on the back burner her whole life. But when it's voiced, it's out there. The dreamer who refuses to find out what's true

The message focuses on how women feel about "The Husbanded One" who is the fallen angel, explains Heide. When the Husbanded One speaks, the others listen without interrupting or "interruptions," explains their book, "include interrupting your own thoughts and opinions or physically dragging or touching the speaker. Physical touch, in an attempt to comfort someone, can be distracting and stop the flow of thoughts and emotions."

When there are pauses, "allow the silence between you and listen." Do not say, "Oh, yeah, that happened to me, too! Don't worry, you're not alone!" or "I know exactly what you mean" and proceed to tell your story. Do not be a problem solver: "You may be confused to have the right answer or interpret the process with your knowledge at hand," Heide

When a group member succeeds, the whole group celebrates "naturally." The book makes the word naturally so emphatic the reaction isn't phony. "You don't think to force yourself to find this way," they write in a section on jealousy. "If you ever feel jealous of other others here, you are not alone. In our cooperative society, we are not typically taught to celebrate the success of others. Another's success can make us feel inadequate." Jealousy is shared the longest; you are a member of the group, they assure. "Jealousy is caused by a selfish need to share." At the end of the meeting, she shares a soup she took toward this dream. Two more steps later, the instructor has his reached her goal. You are just as excited as he is because you supported, encouraged and believed in her.



Sony and Cher's daughter, Chastity Bone, is now "Choi" in a statement that last exclusively male pioneers, a spokesman announced Bone is undergoing a sex change, explaining that "he has made the courageous decision to honour his true identity!" In the book *Family Outing: A Guide to the Coming-Out Process* for Gays, Lesbians, and Their Families, Bone writes about always feeling "different from who you're expected not to be."



PROTESTERS in the streets of Seattle in February 2008 over 100 demonstrators were killed that month by Cameroon security forces

Name the date, Jennifer. I'll be there.

The CHRC's chief commissioner claims she is seeking a 'balanced debate.' Here's my offer.



MARK STEYN

Last week, I wrote about the two nationalist and quasi-fascist parties elected to the European Parliament. When a political movement calls itself, as in Bulgaria, the Attack Party, one naturally expects to hear the usual diatribe of expelling sodomites from west-ern Europe and in North America, the reality is that faction parties get on in coherent slogan, speech, unhesitating and beguilingly earnestly when ever disparaged. So Despotism (to use the title of Paul Rabe's new book) or (to take Kathy Shuehl's and Peter Werh's books) The Tyranny Of Nice.

And so it is that the Canadian "Human Rights" Commission, after lying low during the worst year and a half in its existence, now feels it safe to poke its head above the parapet. A year ago, at the height of public fury over its insouciance of Maclean's for publishing an excerpt of my book, the CHRC sought to get itself off the hook in the traditional manner: commission a report. They signed up professor Richard Moon, who's no fool of course and in fairness the report is starkly convincing. But, alas, my findings, published at the end of last year, not only contradicted the abolition of Section 13 — out, also, on the grounds that this abominable "law" increasing ideological accountability to police the opinions of the judiciary in order with eight centuries of Canada's legal inheritance, but on the narrower substantive basis that in the age of the internet Section 13 is unenforceable.

Still, this came as a bit of a shock to the CHRC though police, who regard its authority as normal for the state to regulate the society

of public discourse. They decided that the Moon report was a victory for the "discipline" of their analysis, and that a second would shortly follow. So this month the CHRC's chief commissioner, Jennifer Lynch, QC (which is better stated, like "Queen of Canada's Bay"), presented a speech report to Parliament called "Freedom of Expression and Precedent from Hate in the Internet Age."

By the way, let me think I'm exaggerating about inept fascist caricature, consider that title it appears to be "balancing" two "harmful rights": but, in fact, it's doing no such thing. "Freedom of discourse, a genuine human right; freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, 'Freedom from' (with the implication of 'freedom from government control') denotes not a human right but a government right—the right to erect a massive edifice as to what is proper or improper discourse as to what is proper or improper to Canadians, very benign, but they're purpose, as well-known, a giant government regulatory regime and a monument on rail, what's known as "freedom from hate."

As an especially by-product concept to a free society, since "hate" is a human condition that bests, comes down or another, in every human heart. To be humane is to hate and be hated: see the scene in *Invitation of a Lady Swallowers* or *The Soggy Wren* or whatever in which it's so nicely explained to the hero how much more smoothly everything operates once you've had all those beastly, conflict, desolating things called "venomous" loomed on and you've put them down through with glass-eyed expression and a flat monotone voice, like Jennifer Lynch reading out the fraternal greetings

from the Soderstrom Human Rights Committee at the CHRC Christmas office party. A society "free" from "hate" is, by definition, totalitarian, because such a "freedom" right is fundamentally inhuman: it can only be granted and policed by the state. And the fact that Commissioner Lynch attempts to make it one end of her balancing act is to be regarded against "freedom of expression" is very revealing: for the chief commissioner and her colleagues, "rights" are not enforceable, but something which is essentially in the gift of the state, and therefore which it is necessary for the state to constrain and "balance" with a value in the appropriate degree of harmlessness.

"The modern conception of rights is that of a matrix with different rights and freedoms mutually reinforcing each other to build a strong and durable human rights system."

Really? A Matrix as in the illusory movie created to maintain a regime of arbitrary by executive government against? Or some sort of intricate biological sequencing very few people can understand? No matter. In the old days, "human rights" meant rights for humans. Now it means building a "human right" system, which sounds a lot like just another government bureaucracy. Back in 1979, if you read Margot Curia Lavender's (my wife's) I don't think they had "lock their" human rights meant the King was restrained by his subjects. Eight hundred years later, "human rights" CHRC: systems that the subjects perpetrated by the Crown, in the form of Queen Jennifer. I liked it better the old way.

The greatest threat to human rights is always an abusive government. For example, in February last year, Cameroon security forces shot and killed over 100 demonstrators. According to Cameroon human rights lawyer Lavender Tapp, detainees are routinely



THE GLASS-EYED Wives: Way back but their husbands loomed out, but to be humane, when Steyn, is to hate and be hated

strapped, beaten and then thrown into dungeons filled with broken glass and shot from behind trees. In 1997, Tissa Edou, after announcing he would be running for the Cameroon presidency against long-time secessionist Paul Biya, was suddenly arrested and has been in jail ever since. In March last year, 155 Cameroon detainees appeared for trial at the Douala Court of First Instance before a chief judge in their underwear. In February, the publisher of *Le Point*, a news paper in London, reported on the high sales of government officials, after which the police showed up, bound and blindfolded them, and took them away. According to Amnesty International, in 2007 at least nine men and four women were convicted of homosexuality.

Okay, Steyn, that's enough Cameroonians telling you updates: what's your point? Only this. Ever since Commissioner Lynch decided to assert herself into my life, I've made it my job to get at least as concise a file on Jennifer as her organization keeps on those Canadian citizens of whom it disapproves. And I was struck by the chief commissioner's introductory remarks at last October's "Discrimination Prevention Forum" in Ottawa.

"From year to year, we generate more interest in the global human rights community I estimate many welcome to our distinguished international guests. My Deane Gervais Banda, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian National Human Rights and Freedoms Commission, and Mr. Marc Segal, also from the Canadian Commission. We are pleased to have with us Mr. Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Ontario Commissioner Barbara Hall, from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to our gathering."

What's to "distinguish" about the Cameroon Human Rights Commission? Cameroon has an appalling human rights record.

Freedom House ranks the country not merely as "not free," but as one of the 30 worst nations on earth for political rights and civil liberties, down dead at the bottom of the barrel with Burma, Equatorial Guinea, North Korea and Sudan. Why weren't they among the "distinguished guests" in Commissioner Lynch's "Discrimination Prevention Forum"? Not enough *Asian Canadian* frequency?

If you acknowledge enough Third World things mean, it's not surprising your postmodern cultural relativism starts to end up the point of no return. As Commissioner Lynch proudly notes in her report, America's First Amendment abolition on free speech is out of step with the "growing global consensus" represented by the CHRC and its "distinguished guests" like Sweden and Cameroon, despite the difference, and that should be enough human rights for anyone.

In an op-ed for the *Globe and Mail*, Jennifer Lynch justified her report on the grounds that it would assert a "balanced debate." That same day, CTV hooked her and Sam Levitt, author of *Shakedown*, the bestselling book about Canada's "human rights" regime, on to Power Line, to have that, or, "debate" she's always talking about. When Queen Jennifer heard there was to be on the show, she refused to debate him, and demanded he be "seconded from the newsroom." As Kathy Shuehl put it: "Canada's Official Censor Ship To Censor TV Debate About Censorship."

Glad, if she won't debate Steyn, I'd be happy to do it. All very "balanced." Maclean's can sponsor it. Steve Palocz or some such public TV crew can anchor it. Name the date. I'll be there. But, in the absence of any willingness to debate, reasonable people pondering Canada's outrageous antipathetic Official Censor might ought not pass philosophically but on Professor Moon-like utterances grounds. If you're not smart enough to debate Ezra Levitt, you're not smart enough to police the opinions of 30 million people. ■

MACLEAN'S BESTSELLERS

COMPILED BY JAMES BATTY

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2. THE CHILDREN'S BOOK

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3. THE WINTER WALK

1.000

4. BROOKLYN by Colm Toibin

1.000

5. THE TIME FOR THE TRUTHFULLY DEAD

1.000

6. THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

1.000

7. NOCTURNES by Kazuo Ishiguro

1.000

8. ROAD DOGS by Elmore Leonard

1.000

9. THE SELECTED MESSAGES OF ISHBY by Jeff Rubin

1.000

10. GOING AWOL by Mark Galloway

1.000

Non-Fiction

1. WHY YOUR WORLD IS ABOUT TO GET A WHOLE LOT SMALLER by Jeff Rubin

1.000

2. DEAD END by Barbara Mayo

1.000

3. OUTLINES by Malcolm Greenleaf

1.000

4. SLOW DEATH BY EUGENE BUCK

1.000

5. THE DEAD SHIFTS by Eric Stein

1.000

6. ALWAYS LOOKING UP by Michael F. Fox

1.000

7. TRUE PINKET LIVES by Michael F. Fox

1.000

8. THE NEXT 10 YEARS by George Friedman

1.000

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MACLEAN'S
MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL



fesclub



SPEAKING FROM experience: our Prime Minister has been through his share of dunnage and defeat—and that's just with a hairbrush

The things he could teach our kids

Kim Jong Il could give a heck of a graduation speech. Actually, so could our dear leader.



SCOTT
FESCHUK

We are in the last days of the season for commencement speeches, the annual rite in which famous and powerful people urge graduating students to follow their hearts, live their dreams, change the world, hug everyone, floss daily, be nice-looking and, oops, sorry we went and broke the global economy just as you were preparing to look for work. Copy that, mate!

The truth is that graduates don't need to be bombarded with well-meaning but dubious expressions of optimism: that's what wedding vows are for. What they need a practical adviser they can actually use in their lives—real wisdom based on real experience, particularly somebody whose life shows the taste of disappointment. (Note: the "taste of disappointment" can be acquired through one's own personal failures or by looking at the poster for the movie *Boys n the Bar*.)

Take Kim Jong Il, for instance. An absolute last choice as commencement speaker? Sure, but really, which seems qualified to avoid the various of perseverance of Kim's pay whose dream literally crashed into the sea and disappeared as a feeble puff of wispy-grey faculty. But did that stop him from projecting national fervor, rife and unbroken in his pursuit of the dream of afflicting upon the earth a raging nuclear blizzard? Not a chance. If Hollywood executives had that level of resolve and determination, we'd have four or five terrible Hulk movies by now, instead of just the two.

Here, in essence, I can't imagine Brian Mulroney received two more invitations to speak this spring, and even fewer that our first presi-

dence grandly not think of it he'd have to offer. The former prime minister could talk about the hazards of hubris and the perils of demanding a public apology any time you want! He could talk about all that, but being Mulroney he'd probably speak on the topic of "Can Anyone Here Break a \$1,000 Bill?"

Or what about the current occupant of 24 Sussex Drive? Stephen Harper has experienced his share of dunnage and defeat, and that's just with a hairbrush. The man has been to impact. Of course, the Prime Minister is busy managing the recession we can't be having right now because we didn't already have it before, so I took the liberty of writing the uplifting conclusion to his commencement address:

"Graduates, as you look to the future, I urge you to remember that to master the scope of the problems you face, no matter the magnitude of the challenges you confront, there is always a way to triumph. Stand tall and remember (strongly, bravely, eagerly)—these are for women, I trust their solution is negative advertising."

"Over the years, I've found that any own disease characteristics are best addressed not by personal improvement or sacrifice, both of which can be a real pain, but by emphasizing or even lowering the fears of others."

"The best thing about this approach of mine, refined over many years of being pushed out the sports, is that it doesn't work only in politics. Denying a rival as an effective weapon, Taliban guerilla fighter or child photographer is fun and effective in most aspects of life, and using props."

"Let's say you're up for a promotion at work. It's down to you and one other guy. And that guy—we'll call him Ron Jenkins—is using all

sorts of unfair tactics to get the job, like lying, skills and a personality. All it takes to own the odds is a video camera, a little creativity and a good as black as night."

[Stare, jaw-type mouth over black-and-white images of Ron Jenkins chasing adorable children off the lawn, possibly while holding a rifle.]

Deep, ominous voice over:
Ron Jenkins. He's been at our company for 12 years.

He's had the same job for 12 years.
You know who else worked in the same job for 12 years?

Maker.
It makes you wonder: what else does Ron Jenkins have in common with history's greatest crooks?

And where does Ron Jenkins go when he leaves the office? Does he go home to his family? Or does he go... somewhere else?

[Artistic depictions of Ron Jenkins having apple martinis with Al Capone, Pat Paul and De O'Connell.]

Ron Jenkins says he's a company man. But every secret, he doesn't come into work for two whole weeks—while still carrying a payroll! That's just like making, except in the legal sense.

[Images of the earth exploding.]
Plus, Ron Jenkins might theoretically have puppy dogs.

[Images of a puppy dog exploding.]
Ron Jenkins—he's not at our company. He's in it for himself!

"Graduates, as you head out into the world, I urge you to never forget the only place of wisdom that truly matters: if you don't have anything nice to say, you're on the right track." ■

ON THE WEB: To read Feschuk on the Internet, visit his blog: macleans.com/feschuk

NORA ULRIKE PERRA BOOTH

1941-2009

After retiring from teaching, she became a clown, entertaining patients in hospitals and nursing homes

Nora Ulrike Perla Booth was born on Nov. 13, 1941, in the German-occupied ghetto, now Gliwice, Poland. The second daughter of Martha and Victor Truchsess, Nora narrowly escaped death at the age of three when her family was being evacuated by the Nazi army. The trich had been moving as a family unit, and she had to release herself. A soldier offered to take her, then catch up with the train. Just as they got off, gunfire erupted. The train sped up, leaving the soldier and Nora in the light against the Allies, and her mother believed she was gone. But two hours later the soldier miraculously reappeared, with Nora in his arms.

The family immigrated to Canada in 1947 and settled in Barrow, Ont., where her father became an executive of the Blue Shoe Company. When she was 16, Nora's older sister Maria was kidnapped. Later that year, her mother died. Maria's death would remain an agonizing mystery in Nora's life. Shortly after, the family relocated to Hamilton, where Nora finished her high school degree. She graduated from McMaster University in 1962 and became a high school teacher with the Scarborough school board.

Two years later, Nora took a leave of absence to visit Europe with three friends. In late July, they travelled by bus from Hamilton to New York City where they boarded a boat named the Aurelia and enjoyed a 10-day crossing to England. After touring England, they stayed with Nora's aunt Lene, a Lutheran nun who lived outside of Bremen, Germany, then bought a Volkswagen for their use. By December, they were in Florence, where a year before the river Arno had flooded the city. Teams of students were volunteering to restore damaged books, documents and artwork. "That's when Nora decided that she was ready to bring on the go all the time," recalls Lagan Goldings, who was in the trip. Taken by the city, Nora settled in Florence to volunteer as well.

It was there she met her future husband, Sebastiano Perla, a member of the Carabinieri, Italy's military police, who was wearing his royal blue uniform complete with military hat during their first encounter on the streets of Florence. On Sundays, Sebastiano had the whole afternoon off and they would always enjoy dinner together. "My family, they welcomed Nora like a princess," he remembers. In 1977, he proposed a 10-day leave from the force to wed Nora,

in a ceremony that took place in Hamilton on a sunny day in early September. They settled in Toronto and had their first child, Marc, five years later, followed by their second daughter, Christine, a year after. "I have never met anyone who was so totally proud and accepting of her girls," says Nora's friend of 29 years, Jean Fryd. "The three of them together could do anything."

Sebastiano and Nora separated after 11 years of marriage but remained involved in each other's lives. "They were close all their time," says Marc. "They were always being parents together." In fact, when they finally divorced in 1993, they didn't bother to get the divorce certificate on paper. When Nora wanted a ceremony in 2003, she faced a minor administrative hurdle—the was technically still married to Sebastiano in the absence of the physical certificate.

Following her retirement from teaching in 1998, Nora lived a free creative, spontaneous life. For the first time she dressed up as Santa Claus for Christmas, even though her kids were in their twenties. She also began clowning with her friend Mary Lynn Roberts, taking on the clown-like royal fooling. The two performed at hospitals and nursing homes across Toronto with the Toronto Clown Alliance, a downtown coalition. "She was a way of bringing out, and a talent that she could give to other people," says daughter Christine. In fact, Nora was on the cover of the March 3, 2003, issue of Maclean's magazine, for a story about retirees finding second careers.

Moving into a new condominium in 2001, Nora inspired the "uprise" of the community, says neighbour Jean Kozak. She had stopped clowning by 2005 and served as the Toronto clown alliance board of directors, celebrated birthdays and anniversaries with baked goods, and organized trips and meals. After a finally accepting her divorce certificate, she married Joe Booth, her partner of 12 years, in 2006. Sebastiano died early of poliovirus fibrosis in 2007. Then, on Feb. 8, 2008, experiencing indigestion and bloating, Nora visited Sunnybrook hospital, a place where she used to clown. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. "She asked me if I would paint a picture of her in her clown suit. She wanted to give it to her granddaughter Sonya," says Jean. Nora passed away at her home on May 20, 2009. She was 67. The papers hang in Sonya's room.

BY SYDNEE KANE



THE ECONOMY. THE ECONOMY. THE ECONOMY. ISN'T IT TIME YOU HAD A LITTLE MORE VARIETY?

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